# THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE

By

THOMAS VERNOR SMITH

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TO GAYLE
AND HIS COMRADES IN THE
DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT

# PREFACE

DEMOCRACY is a doctrine of both means and ends. While technicians work at the former, the latter must not be lost to view. For without the emotional urge that comes from contemplation of our goals, we shall degrade humanity's greatest enthusiasm into a barren formalism. This solicitude is not pointless at our present juncture in America. Science itself sometimes learns so well how to do as to forget what it is that is to be done. The following popular exposition of democratic ideals is meant to season daily duties with the joy of social vision.

The editors of the *Journal of Philosophy* have been good enough to let me modify and combine for chapter v material which they first published, and the editor of the *Scientific Monthly* has accorded me the same privilege for chapter vi.

If I may claim to have provided the literary warp, then certainly my colleagues at the

University of Chicago have furnished the spiritual woof, of this book. Professor Edwin A. Burtt, my colleague in philosophy, has read the manuscript and in frequent friendly conversations has helped me to discern and clarify the larger drift of my own thought. Dean Ernest H. Wilkins, my administrative chief, has squandered precious time on every page to make more effective the argument, to beautify the statement, or to deepen the analysis. To him I also owe the suggestion and the translation of the lines from Leopardi used in chapter iii. Mr. C. M. Perry, my secretary and friend, has, with a highly critical eye, read both the manuscript and the proof, and has daily shown me how a gifted mind may be democratic in all its human contacts. And beyond these debts incurred by and discharged in treasured friendship, what do I not owe to other fellow-workers? To youthful students who might be my inferiors but are not, to eminent scholars and scientists who might be my superiors but are not—to all these professional colleagues I owe the invaluable lesson of how

men may live together in diversified peace, in fruitful disagreement, sustained by an unspoken sense of co-operation. For those whose toil on farm, in home, in factory, and in mine makes possible my leisure to think and write—for them I save the final word.

Here take this gift,
I was reserving it for some hero, speaker, or general,
One who should serve the good old cause, the great idea, the progress and freedom of the race,
Some brave confronter of despots, some daring rebel;
But I see that what I was reserving belongs to you just as much as to any.

T. V. S.

Labor Day, 1925

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# TOWARD THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE

*Chapter I*

# TOWARD THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE

IF, laying a strong hand upon our world, we could, with Omar, "shatter it to bits —and then Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire" in what precise image should we make it? The utopias of mankind afford the most substantial historical answer to this question. But the utopias of the modern world have been distilled into one formula—democracy. If the latent ideals of democracy were fully realized, we should find the whole utopian motif practically pillaged and deeply exploited. As Mr. Lewis Mumford says of other objectified ideals, so of democracy—it has oftentimes been a utopia of escape. But it is capable of being made a utopia of reconstruction. This book is dedicated to that precise end—to help make democracy a principle or reconstruction. But for this purpose we need most of all, as well as first of all, to understand the ends that democracy has set

up, so that we may decide for ourselves whether they envisage a world that we should approve.

Democracy, like so many other good causes, has suffered from its friends as well as from its enemies. Its friends have too often thought of it as a mere form of government set over against other forms. So long as men did not have a voice in saying who should manage their common affairs, or any right of effective appeal against those who mismanaged them, democracy, with abundantly good reason, did mean the management of community affairs by those whom the people themselves chose. But its formal distinctness is relatively unimportant. It is because men everywhere have had their hearts set upon something far more substantial than any form of government that many in modern times have expressed profound disappointment over the first century of democratic achievement. And indeed, if what it has accomplished is all that it has to offer, then democracy is in all truth a mighty failure. Not because it has not achieved much, but

because men devoted themselves to it with vaster expectation.

Lord Bryce, a lifelong friend of democracy, has called attention in a most emphatic fashion to this general disappointment. He suggests that men have expected too much from democracy. But the question may well be raised: How could men have expected less than they did expect without being heartily ashamed of themselves? Human beings who look for assured life, with freedom to live it in friendliness, are not expecting too much. How dare they expect less? It is more likely that men by their little faith have lessened democratic achievement. Bryce himself, for instance, has insisted that the only legitimate meaning for democracy is a form of government. Now what does a mere form of government boot men who are hunting the good life? We might quote Bryce against himself, for it was he who in another connection declared that "popular government has been usually sought and won and valued *not as a good thing in itself, but as a means of getting rid of tangible grievances or securing tangible bene-*

*fits.*" But rather than chide our friends let us merely state the fact that to common men a form of government can mean no more than the means to seek the good life in their own way. If men are persuaded to make the form an end rather than the means it is, they are asked to stop when they have barely started. Of course it is important that men govern themselves, but primarily so because this troublesome procedure is the only known guaranty that they can seek their own ends. And so the democratic pioneers undertook to capture government because they had to capture it before they could lead their own lives. With enemies in the seats of power the world was not safe for common men.

But the conquest of the machine turned out to be a very long, hard job. The slow manner in which the suffrage has been universalized indicates that when men started to capture the machinery of government, they undertook a greater task than they realized. Long-established institutions do not fall or change their form upon demand. Only now,

after so long a struggle, has the suffrage become really universal, and perhaps now only through the exigency of war. Have men, dazed by this long resistance to their initial demand, forgotten their real objective? It would seem at times that the means achieved have really usurped the place of the hoped-for end.

This miscarriage of faith has come about all the more easily because no period has been free from the activity of selfish men who did all they could to make common men forget their goal. Setting out grandly to achieve liberty, equality, and fraternity, men have at last achieved the right to vote—to vote for candidates they know not, representing issues little more understood. But contrast this eventuation with the rosy meaning that both the French and the American pioneers attached to those magic words at the beginning of democratic agitation! Those were stirring days when Frenchmen overnight would abolish feudalism and Americans would by declaration set up universal hu-

man equality. Wordsworth, sojourning in France, caught the enthusiasm and hardly overstated it:

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very Heaven!

Turn again from such high expectation to survey the resultant in our day. As the voter walks into the polling booth and sweats over a hundred names hardly less familiar to him than the duties of the offices they seek, he mutters to himself: "Is this liberty? Is this equality? Is this fraternity?" Yes; equality for an hour, liberty to gesticulate with a pencil in the dark, fraternity with those who share his plight.

Asking for bread and receiving thus a ballot, men have reacted like the humans they are. Some have in infuriation tried to take affairs into their own hands. Democracy turns out like other forms of government, a cheat and a fraud. Violence remains. In disillusion, anarchists have now and then, even in America, slipped back to the level of

primitive men and have acted on that oldest of all political philosophies,

> . . . . the good old rule
> Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
> That they should take, who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.

But rebellion that makes one man infamous may in our world make famous those better situated. For after all the same attitude has been often expressed within the limits of respectability by those who, having intelligence and power, can exclaim with a late American captain of industry: "My God, you surely do not expect me to run a railroad according to law!" But not many people have the initiative or the audacity of the anarchist and the capitalist. So they have just quit. It has come to the pass in America that a vast number of citizens neglect to exercise as a privilege what our ancestors struggled for as a natural right. While of course there are more reasons than just this element of disillusion for the large percentage of non-voters, yet it is certain that most

reasons would be overcome if it were felt that the suffrage got men what they want. The recent study by Merriam and Gosnell of urban conditions, along with similar studies of rural conditions, discloses the fact that slightly less than half of our population qualified to vote actually do vote. One American state reaches the nadir of democratic indifference in showing as voters only 6 per cent of those qualified to vote.

There is no intention here to blame men for not doing what does not seem to them worth doing. The inactivities of men define their evaluations as well as do their activities. Men had the same sort of reaction toward the monarchial state when democracy ushered in an era of hope. Now that the latter has failed them, as they think, they are ready to seek relief and fulness of life in some other more promising direction. This attitude, however, let it be made clear, is not distrust of the goals set up by the democratic pioneers. Life does not thus renounce hope of its own fulfilment.

Whether the failure of democratic govern-

ment has been such as to justify such deep despair remains an open question. But there is one aspect that no man can afford to overlook. If one cannot gain heaven, it is foolish to despair if there still remain in one's hands the means of avoiding hell. We must first renew our appreciation of what democracy has saved us from, and then consider anew its potency for the future. Men have not merely acquired immunity from gross injustices, and the right and power to dispossess the worst of their oppressors. That is all negative. But positively also, they have in their hands that which if it were used constructively, as it has heretofore been used destructively, might bring them to the very threshold of happiness. They cannot, however, effectively use the means until the ends themselves are clear. To thrust in the dark is likely to wound friends and even self. Democrats need more now than ever before to renew their high purposes. The primary aim of the following pages is to set before our tired eyes some glimpses of the vision that in moments of greatest inspiration has heretofore

challenged the hopes and energies of men. Democracy has beyond all ideas of governmental machinery constantly meant a way of life. The tendency of the noun "democracy" to pass into the adjective "democratic," as descriptive of the kind of person easy to live with, well illustrates this ethical potency of a term historically political. And there is no more romantic method of calling attention to the way of life that as an ethical ideal has inspired so many people than to make clear what is the abiding real content of those rather vague symbols that long ago democracy set up to constitute its trinity of aims—liberty, equality, fraternity.

# DEMOCRACY AS FRATERNITY

*Chapter II*

## DEMOCRACY AS FRATERNITY

PERENNIALLY there arise in the dreams of men these three goals: liberty, equality, fraternity. And the brightest of these is fraternity. It would be difficult indeed to do justice in words to the glamor that human imagination has thrown over the notion of brotherhood. Afar off it has stood like a divine promise to the deeper longings that men have had about themselves and their destiny. Fraternity is a conception to which humanity's greatest religious prophets have turned in their ecstacy, and it is a culmination that our finest poets have envisaged in their moments of keenest insight. A lonely Hebrew seer long ago glimpsed through the din of contemporary strife the inspiriting spectacle of a united humanity journeying on a way which in his enraptured vision conducted men unto a perfect order. And a recent social prophet has declared, with similar import, that "*Real* de-

feat will overtake humanity only in so far as men themselves, forgetting that they are comrades in doom and agents of each other's woe or weal, go down the years estranged from the one friend they have—each other." The persistence amid age-old defeat of the longing for a closer tie of man with man suggests that human life cannot reach its highest level except in a world with fewer barriers to friendliness. This challenging ideal will bear inspection both as to depth and breadth.

## I

On its intensive side, fraternity reduces in its essence to something closely resembling love. But the word itself means a relation such as that between brothers. Fraternity is thus a family ideal, with all the intimacy and feeling involved in that most closed of social unions. But it is that merely at the beginning. Historically, men have insisted upon a closed family organization, exclusive and intimate, partly at least by way of compensation for the failure of friendship on a larger scale. If the family must stand alone, then of

course must it stand foursquare. Plato had noticed the tendency of the family to squander loyalty upon itself; and because his heart was set upon making the fraternal unit as wide as the whole city-state, he felt it necessary to abolish the family as far as he could, since it was proving an enemy of the larger loyalty that he sought. If a man cannot lose himself at the heart of the whole herd, then will he insist upon having exclusive right to one or to a few hearts in which he may shuffle off his coil of individual loneliness. For some deep-lying reason, to be considered later, human life is not good if detached. But man, who is completely cowed if he feels that he is really alone, will brave the whole universe when he knows that he is reinforced unequivocally by a few loving hearts. The brave song of the Mermaid Tavern, as represented by Alfred Noyes, is a fitting hymn for all humanity in challenging even the right of deity to violate friendliness.

Well, if God saved me alone of the seven,
Telling me *you* must be damned, or *you*,
"This," I would say, "this is hell, not heaven!
Give me the fire and a friend or two!"

But the fact that man will find satisfaction in life with a very few comrades does not mean that his deeper nature does not crave the indefinite enlargement of friendly contacts. Families grew into clans, and clans expanded to tribes, and tribes turned to nations. The human touch tends to grow from more to more. The intrinsic good of intimate kindliness, when objectified, furnishes a goal in terms of which to conceive an ideal community where all would not only have friends, but be friends.

The never dying dream of men for a warless world is testimonial to the unlimited extension that the ideal of brotherhood claims for itself. In whatever conditions men must actually live as regards strife and dissension, they cannot demand of their ideal less than the cessation of wholesale hostility. This indigenous human longing gets its meaning not so much from the negative emphasis on the abolition of war as from the positive content of friendly association that seems to be implied by perpetual peace. Isaiah became the spokesman of all humanity when he foresaw

through the vagueness of the years men beating their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Men indeed want, more deeply than they want success or glory, a social accord which is forbidden them by the specter of war. And when long brooding over the end seems to bring to our hand the means to it, we find ourselves willing to wage a world-wide war with curious gladness because we are led to believe that it is the war that will end war. The faith that men, in spite of differences, can dwell together in amity incarnates a human hope that no disillusion seems able to dim.

Schisms in spiritual bodies lead to two churches rather than to none. The road from the divorce court leads past the office where marriage licenses are issued. And out of the débris of a universal holocaust there rises as on the wings of magic morning the dream of a League of Nations that will spell the end of war, even as out of its dead ashes rose the phoenix to a new life perennially renewed. Out of opposition to this vision rise disarmament conferences and projected associations

of nations which, even though they too should wither before the bud turn to fruit, would be followed by other plans clothed out of the habiliments of human hopes, and they in turn by others—on to the end of the unending process. Though it is hard for man, the unsocial social animal, to live with men, nothing is more clear than that he cannot live happily without them.

## II

The utter centrality of brotherhood among the natural ends of human hopes and endeavors can be reinforced and somewhat clarified by looking very closely at the stages through which the human being passes on the way from infancy to maturity. Perhaps the most significant thing about every man is that he was at one time a child, and that, furthermore, in becoming a man he did not so much *out*grow as just *over*grow the child nature. Modern psychology is succeeding at last in helping us to understand more clearly what we have always assumed, that the child is father to the man. The deeper into

childhood one probes, the more does friendliness appear both the warp and woof of life. The infant is not really born into the world at all; he is born merely into a family. And there is here a vast difference in the expectations aroused. The harsher physical environment that would bring the helpless infant death in a day is so mediated to him by parental tenderness as to turn what otherwise were an inevitable doom into a heaven of love fairer than the most enchanting phantasy of poets. He awakes to consciousness, his human heritage,

> Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
> With light upon him from his father's eyes.

And even the inhumanities that man shows man are themselves left also, with the harsher sandals of physical fact, at the threshold of the human nursery. As the infant sees no gruff lineament of nature that can possibly be concealed from him, so also he discovers only the smiling, caressing moods of the Janus-faced human world. His food is warmed and sweetened for him, his clothing is softened,

and his random movements are constituted a repertoire on a royal stage where every gesture is enthusiastically encored. In his world, fire is hot but never burns, winter is cold but never freezes, want is pinching but seldom pinches. His facts are tamed down with fancy, and his beliefs are toned up to thrilling story.

Born thus into a mediating, comforting group and sustained by it through helpless years, man would not be the animal he is if, when later confronted by the sterner side of his human world and disillusioned by the gruff demands of his physical environment, he did not turn back in pained surprise upon his early fairy god-mother for confirmation of his rosy expectations. And it is a surprise greater perhaps than ever comes to an adult when the all-sufficient friendliness that has surrounded the infant begins to fail the growing child, when he first discovers that he cannot have everything he wants; it involves the utter reversal of that order of nature which his small group's solicitude had led him to expect. Typical is the perplexity of the four-

year old who imperiously demanded why the cupboard was bare, since Mother Hubbard would be kind to the dog. Human life is indeed started on its course overwhelmed with the benedictions of what seems a complete fraternity.

Now this heaven that lies about us in our infancy is of inestimable influence throughout the whole of human life. Whether the first great disillusion leads to rebellion against one's group, or to a developing cynicism, or to an understanding co-operation with one's family in buffeting common hardships, the dream of the blessedness that preceded the awakening does not wholly depart. Dimly remembered and oftentimes utterly unrecognized images from this forgotten Elysium of infancy we project to form our later social utopias. For its reinstatement we unknowingly strive in our quest for romantic love. In conventional religious devotion we flee reality to reconstruct in a timeless, painless clime what we realized in all its mystic fulness ere shades of the prison house began to close upon us. According to the fruits of

friendliness that we have known in early years, the nature of our seeking throughout life is largely determined. We cannot be content without at least vaguely striving to reinstate on a genuinely universal scale what in our initial experiences was complete and beatific. Thus does love forever radiate among men its comforting afterglow.

But brotherhood becomes a necessary and natural end of human endeavor not merely because we passed through it and learned to respond to it in infancy and childhood. To put the matter in terms that imply that we started life with a definite personal equipment and then were deeply influenced by our first experiences would be merely to observe the periphery but to fail to see the very heart of the powerful impetus toward fraternity. We start life with no more than a body; we acquire a soul in the stages through which our body grows. Now our first experiences lay the cornerstone of our personality and thus largely determine the kind of full-grown soul we shall have. But our first experiences, as we have seen, are constituted by intimate

contacts with a group, and that too with a group that displays in general only kindness. Our very individuality rises thus in the sunlight of brotherhood and breathes the exhilarating air of unreserved friendliness. However much clouds of distrust may later obscure the sun, or gases of discord stagnate our spiritual air, our birthright is sunshine, and pure air is our inheritance. Of these we shall dream even when dark night overtakes us, and we shall refuse to be fully contented except in the glad confidence that the morning cometh again.

The fact that our helplessness in infancy renders it quite necessary that if we are to survive at all we must be surrounded by ministering hands, makes it equally necessary, as already suggested, that we shall later discover the limitations of love. The deepest irony of life lies precisely here: we survive in infancy and childhood only by getting such treatment as later dooms us to disillusion. The inability of our group later to fulfil the expectations raised in us leads to distrust and even at times to alienation. Only the subtle

technique of analytic psychology can show us how genuinely blessed is the personality that escapes from the family group into the larger social world without deep scars left by well-intentioned love.

This is, however, but a special case of the general form the irony of living takes when it plants in achievement the seeds of contentment, making thus the goal of every stage of growth mean the doom of further growing. While no one wholly escapes the travail of this second birth, men differ greatly in their adaptive and recuperative ability. Those who suffer least often content themselves with loyalty to the smaller group that has nourished them in comforting love, sublimating in one way or another the call of the wider brotherhood which is waiting to be built after the pattern of the smaller one. Those who suffer most may become misanthropic and lose faith in the attempt to universalize fraternity, or they may in impotence devote themselves to some ethical or religious abstraction, and thus defeat their ideal potentiality through worship of a dream.

Between the wasting of loyalty upon some group smaller than the human whole and the squandering of one's energy upon some abstraction substituted for the whole, enough human benevolence has been lost in our era to have built the heavenly Jerusalem in this green and sunny land. One must out of the best of motives emphasize this leakage; for the shortness of the distance that we have come in progress toward a world-wide community is no less than astonishing in the light of our love for family and friends on the one side and our devotion on the other side to the ideal of human brotherhood.

III

We may perhaps further consider this anomalous situation for a moment without seeming to labor the point. There can hardly be any doubt but that in family love and daily friendships we have the leaven which needs only proper culture to leaven the whole human lump. Alfred E. Zimmern well expresses this faith in his *Greek Commonwealth*.

> The early Greeks went down to levels that reason had not yet plumbed and embodied the elemental unselfishness—the sense of one human being's natural relation to another—which was the germ of Greek citizenship as of all good citizenship since. . . . . There is no true fraternity which does not grow, as it grew in Greece, out of the plain primeval emotions of friendship or family.

But we have not been able satisfactorily to promote its growth on this larger scale. Nor were the Greeks able to do so. Their tolerance and friendly treatment of men never reached farther than the Greek race, and that far only intermittently under the excitement of sport or the intimidation of external invasion. But the Greek failure does not present the same problem as does our own failure. They did not set themselves the goal. We have. Indeed we have tied up the brotherhood of man with the very center of our religion, the fatherhood of God.

And it may well be that our impotence is rooted in that very fact. In connecting these two great ideals so indissolubly we but symbolize the fact that we have practically turned over to religion and to religious men

the guardianship and nurture of fraternity, at least in so far as the ideal outruns family affection and personal friendship. Representing all too accurately our general disposition, Adam Smith, speaking for earlier economic theory, intrusted to a mysterious "invisible hand" all interests looking toward co-operation, and then left each individual free to seek his own economic advantage wherever he thought he could find it. This is but of a piece with our making basic the fatherhood of God, and then thinking to deduce from it the brotherhood of man. In commenting upon this error we may also indicate more clearly just what democracy can expect of religion.

There can be no doubt, psychologically speaking, that we are guilty of serious inversion in basing human brotherhood upon the fatherhood of God. Indeed, this was glimpsed long ago by a deeply religious man: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Historically and psychologically alike, the fatherhood of God is the derivative, rather than the source, of human

brotherhood. The conception of a loving, fatherly deity has arisen out of human fraternizing. God has progressively escaped provincialism only as men's sympathies have enlarged beyond their clan. As the tribe in social organization gave way slowly to the nation, God was also liberalized; and only in so far as human needs and interests and friendships have overrun national boundaries has God himself been escaping from the bonds of nationalism. The concept of God grows *pari passu* with the growth of human brotherhood, just as any effect is enlarged or accelerated by strengthening its cause. To attempt to make brothers indirectly by appealing to the artificial premise of a common divine fatherhood of those who are not directly lovable does not make them in fact more lovable. It does, however, often result in smearing over the relationship a pious barrage whose effect may well be to obscure from one himself the malevolent interests served under cover of a comforting pietism. It may make one feel righteous, for instance, in taking up "the white man's burden"—

that watchword of imperialism both in politics and in morals which stimulates one's business as much as it does his religious instinct. At least, to seek for a stimulus of conduct outside the field where the response is to function is to take the initial step toward social inefficiency.

There is no royal road to ethical achievement. We must first build our city of man, trusting that the guardian genius necessary to rule it wisely will arise with the building, rather than hypostatize a ruler, enthrone him on the pinnacle of our imagination, and then count upon appeals to him magically to rear the walls of our fair city. Where two or three are gathered together in friendship, there deity arises among them; if they add to their number, deity is expanded; and if they can include all men in the charmed circle of their friendliness, they have created a world God for citizens of the world.

Of old men wrought strange gods for mystery,
Implored miraculous tokens in the skies,
And lips that most were strange in prophecy
Were most accounted wise.

. . . . . .

And so they built them altars of retreat,
  Where life's familiar use was overthrown,
And left the shining world about their feet,
  To travel worlds unknown.

. . . . . .

We hunger still. But wonder has come down
  From alien skies upon the midst of us;
The sparkling hedgerow and the clamorous town
  Have grown miraculous.

And man from his far traveling returns
  To find yet stranger wisdom than he sought,
Where in the habit of his threshold burns
  Unfathomable thought.

We are now prepared to see more clearly than before the true relation between religion and democracy. Men do not need religion to furnish them with the ideal of fraternity. The intrinsic value of the fraternal experience is laid too deeply in their very nature to require its introduction from without. Brotherhood is not only not founded upon the fatherhood of God, it is not even founded upon religion at all. It is quite the other way around. Religion is founded upon the experience of brotherhood. As fraternity

is its true basis, cultivation and extension of brotherhood is its central function. Even when religion in its simplicity thought its task to be that of saving lost men, the real function it performed was in re-connecting detached men with some source of concrete human co-operation and friendliness. It may well be that it is always a religious mistake for religion to institutionalize itself. Certain it is, historically, that the formation of the Christian church—to take an outstanding example—encouraged the highly unfortunate attempt to constitute a certain set of values as peculiarly religious ones and thus tended to detach religion more and more from the world, until eventually it was thought not to be concerned with this world at all. If once that false trail could be fully renounced, then it would become clear to all, as now it is to a few religious men, that there are no religious values that are not at the same time some other sort of values. With this recognition firmly in mind, two functions would remain in a democracy that might be called religious under whatever

auspices performed; and both of them have to do with the ideal of fraternity.

The first function would be to see that no human being remain for long detached from some friendly functional group. To be "lost" means to be socially out of touch. To be "saved" means to "belong": to have duties to perform, to know how to perform them, and to have somebody to care whether they are performed well or ill. And so the first religious function in a democracy is illustrated in the care of orphan children, in the rehabilitation of criminals, in the re-establishment of people otherwise so unfortunate as temporarily to be isolated from their most promising small group. The man without a friendly group to sustain him cannot be a good citizen in a democracy; for it is this living experience of intimate brotherhood, needing no further justification than its own felt intrinsic value, from which alone can be derived the vision of good that, when projected on a larger scale, forms the objective for which democracy works.

The second function in a democracy that

might be called religious would be the enlarging of men's nature so that loyalty to the small group would not militate against loyalty to the human group as such. Education and training whose end is tolerance and co-operation are religious in nature. And such faith as knows no discouragement is needed for this task. There is no short-cut to brotherhood that far outruns our kin. Quite to the contrary, here is the knottiest problem that social minded men have; and its solution no one as yet knows. Sociology has arisen to help in the answer; and the social sciences in general will join in the task as they become more enlightened. But not deduction from divine fatherhood, as religion has thought, but induction from an enlarged understanding of human nature—this alone can help us here. Until this humble scientific method does brick by brick raise the splendid temple of fraternity, no persistence in religious asseveration, no warmth of enthusiasm, will conjure up its walls. Increased knowledge will prove more fruitful than any resort to holy names. Historical religions, professing in-

spiration and therefore confessing little need for basic knowledge, have tended to remain impotent in dogmatism. But this stupendous task of cultivating brotherhood from the bottom to the top of our social relations is religious in its nature, and constitutes a major function for whatever type of organization can best perform it in a democracy.

If only this whole matter could once be brought home to the deeper consciousness of religious men, organized religion itself might become the real ally of those who actually are working to enlarge the borders of human brotherhood. But there is here no desire, not even willingness, to invest the democratic way of life with the halo that religion is supposed to give every good cause. Religion as historically conceived has, perhaps, little to contribute toward the initiation of a genuinely democratic order; but this is so primarily because religion has too often misconceived its task. It has thought that its task was to proclaim to men an existent deity, to call them to the true worship of this deity, and to help them divest themselves of carnal in-

cumbrances. The task, however, that it was all the while actually performing—though slowly because of indirection—was to construct out of friendship's will-to-become-incarnate a constantly enlarging brotherhood, the guardian genius of which would be a morally evolving deity. Conceived in any other way religion is the enemy of the democratic way of life. For the democratic way is the genuinely religious way of life; only, it does not need, and cannot accept, external sanctions. To make democracy institutionally religious would be to endanger democracy; but to make religion democratic would be to save religion. And so from widely scattered religious sources today is going up the most hopeful cry that organized Christianity has uttered since the Galilean elevated man above the sabbath—the cry that religion and even God must be democratized. This does not demand an entirely new spirit for religion, since it has never wholly lost its instinct for brotherhood; but it does demand a new orientation on earth and an alignment with those who are really its friends rather

than with those who merely assert allegiance. Abou Ben Adhem, may thy tribe increase!

We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say they are not divine,
I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still,
It is not they who give the life, it is you who give the life,
Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth, than they are shed out of you.

If the enthusiasm and initiative that men, in the name of religion, have actually diverted from concrete human processes could be turned full force into a scientific quest for the bases of antipathy and strife and into a positive study of the conditions for creating and maintaining and disseminating the practice of co-operation, the democratic way of life might slowly begin to be realized on earth as religion has heretofore dreamed that it would be realized in heaven. If heaven does not grow gradually thus from earthly soil, it can but prove at last another dear il-

lusion. Nor can the God of religion do men any good so long as they remain alienated from one another. Men had as well leave their gifts upon the altar to some unknown God—like the honest Athenians—until they become reconciled on a universal scale with one another. But if they can learn to co-operate in friendliness, the true God will then be so near them that they need no longer seek him; for when men dwell together in amity, they already live and move and have their being in the essence of what our fathers thought to await the godly beyond the stars. Gilbert Murray has somewhere suggested that the cry of men for a transcendental deity is but a misdirected yearning for what only earthly friends can give; and certain it is that religion cannot be a valuable ally of democracy until it is willing to regard openly as its foundation what Walt Whitman, the poet of American democracy, has so beautifully called "the Base of all Metaphysics." His poem of that title is the natural conclusion to this section of our discussion.

And now, gentlemen,
A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,
As base, and finale too, for all metaphysics.

. . . . . .

Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic systems,
Kant having studied and stated—Fichte and Schelling and Hegel,
Stated the lore of Plato—and Socrates, greater than Plato,
And greater than Socrates sought and stated—Christ divine having studied long,
I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems,
See the philosophies all—Christian churches and tenets see,
Yet underneath Socrates clearly see—and underneath Christ the divine I see,
The dear love of man for his comrade—the attraction of friend to friend,
Of the well-married husband and wife—of children and parents,
Of city for city, and land for land.

In the foregoing discussion we have seen fraternity as a natural and necessary ethical end for men. Religion has testified to this, in its failures as well as in its success; and

democracy aims fundamentally at the progressive attainment of this objective. We have seen that were there no other reason for the persistence of this beacon light the experiences of infancy and childhood would themselves incline our hearts to brotherhood. For we not only pass during those periods through influences that so incline us, but we ourselves are actually created in these processes of social concord. We not only, therefore, will not, but we cannot escape the call to friendliness.

When me they fly I am the wings.

## IV

But there are other cogent reasons for regarding fraternity as a primary human good, more extrinsic, but hardly less compelling, than the ones already discussed. They would indeed be felt by a race that lacked the inner urge of humans to sociality. As over against the conditions of the good life that we project for ourselves in ideal, there are certain conditions that nature prescribes for any life at all. Now it happens that an animal like

man not only cannot live well without his fellows, but cannot live at all. The utter helplessness of the human infant is the elemental proof of this assertion. And what is true of the infant is true in only less measure of the mature man. As Walter Bagehot remarks,

> The rudest sort of cooperative society, the lowest tribe and the feeblest government, is so much stronger than isolated man, that isolated man (if he ever existed in any shape which could be called man), might very easily have ceased to exist. The first principle . . . . is that man can only make progress in "cooperative groups."

Indeed, despite the utmost measure of cooperation attained by man historically, in the sweat of his brow has he even until now eaten his bread. Malthus thought that man, voyaging forever between the Scylla of a geometrically increasing population and the Charybdis of an arithmetically increasing food production, must forever be broken upon the shallows of misery. The fear of such an irremediable fate, with basis perhaps real enough in Malthus' time, has been gradual-

ly lifting since his day, but lifting because of the growing areas over which fraternity has spread. Though we have already seen reason to supplement the statement, yet as far as it goes there is wisdom in Blackstone's remark that "it is the sense of their weakness and imperfection that keeps mankind together." In a world clearly not made for man, it has been only through the priceless gift of an associative heart, furnished in Plato's myth by the pitying gods, that man has survived.

Now what has been true of his journey thus far remains as a healthy moral for the way ahead. It is not prudent to discard that by which alone we have arrived. This is a lesson very easy to forget with our growing urbanization; for no longer does our daily living seem to depend upon our constant working together; but what is difficult to see in the small appears clearer when written large. We have our bread for today and even for tomorrow, come what may. But what of next year? Failure of harvest for a single season over a large area imperils a nation; and two general crop failures in succession

would darken every human door with the gaunt shadow of primeval hunger. If such a failure is unlikely, then it is so only because of the advances in scientific agriculture made possible by a growing intellectual co-operation of men friendly disposed toward one another and one another's work. And crops or no crops, a complete tie-up of our transportation system would in three months' time bring our proudest metropolis to its knees. Oil is no more necessary to a locomotive than is a practical measure of fraternity necessary now, as always, to the continuation of our social life and indeed of any life at all. The helplessness of men if detached from the strengthening hand of each other furnishes cogent proof of the centrality of fraternity in our human enterprise.

## V

Such a way of life as that here envisaged remains confessedly in large part an ideal, but it is the major part of the end that moved men to institute democratic governments as a means. If men had not seen

through the haze of popular legislatures and administrative bureaus the shining ideal of a closer human contact, it is certain that they would not have troubled themselves to set up the democratic machinery. And now that we have at last succeeded in establishing the political means, we must not lose sight of the moral end that inspired us to the effort, the long lasting effort. No generation can afford to forget that where men's hearts are there is humanity's treasure also. There are those who would gladly have us forget that we wanted a universal friendliness as reward for the labor spent in building popular government. It is not that they themselves do not feel the longing for fraternity in some obscure fashion. It is oftentimes they that have suffered the deepest scars in trying to transfer their loyalty from some exclusive to a universal community. Interests that are callously selfish on the periphery are not always so at heart. In a large sense every man wills only his own good, but in ignorance of what his good is he commits himself all too often to ways of living that progressively shut out

what, following attainment, he himself would treasure as his greater good. We must not forget the intrinsic meaning of brotherhood and we must work for it in the interest of those who oppose it as well as in our own interest. This conviction itself breeds tolerance and friendliness. Here, then, is the first objective, ethically as well as historically, of the democratic way of life-fraternity.

# DEMOCRACY AS LIBERTY

*Chapter III*

## DEMOCRACY AS LIBERTY



THOUGH central to the good life as men have conceived it, fraternity cannot come to its full richness without associating with it certain other virtues. And first among these in the history of civilization must be mentioned liberty. One might have a fraternity of slaves; he might have a fraternity of the poverty-stricken; he might have a fraternity of morons. But none of these would be the meaningful brotherhood that men have dreamed in the hours of their utopia-building. The one condition that underlies all ideal brotherhoods is that their members shall themselves be free. Otherwise fraternity would become only a shining mausoleum. Men must be free in order to constitute a worthy brotherhood. This is a proposition so obvious as perhaps to appear self-evident. And yet it bears repeated emphasis; for when the motivation toward fraternity is hot upon a human being,

he is all too likely to take his treasure by violence. The method of military conquerors testifies to the haste—and waste—by which men seek to set up social unity. But even in the field of theory, where all is more pliable, we may see the same forces at work. Two examples from gifted prophets of human brotherhood—Plato and Rousseau—will serve forcibly to illustrate the way liberty fares when fraternity is the theme.

## I

Plato saw that his society must be active in order to survive, but he did not see that it must be free. He espoused, therefore, so rigorous a distribution of labor as drowned liberty in a dead calm of economic orderliness. Each citizen was to work at a task assigned him from above. Nor was any man to have more than one job. Voting and sitting on the jury would constitute suicidal distraction for workers. Lest those who drew the fated balls in this industrial lottery should rebel, he insinuated the external sanctions into their very souls by loading their early educa-

tion with the virtue of temperance, and thus taught conscience to shame aspiration with the cry of sin. Anticipating the objection that in such a society no one would be happy, he declared that not individual, but general, happiness was his aim. And nerving his really humane spirit for the stern measures that would surely be necessary to maintain so repressive an order, he excused in his rulers the use of "some gentle violence for the subjects' good"; and then, as it were, offered a prize for a name soft enough to befit the gentility of this benevolent coercion. So insistent was he that men cannot be happy and good until they are brothers that he would set up by military force and maintain by educational fraud the glorious goal of fraternity.

If there be those who would lay this paradox to the fact that Plato lived after all in an early age, was aristocratic rather than democratic, and was doctrinaire rather than practical, let them reflect upon the example of Rousseau, whose substantial insight became the cornerstone of modern democracy, and

whose eloquent voice still reverberates in the structure that we have builded.

Rousseau, too, was enamored of brotherhood. Finding it absent from the colossal inequalities of contemporary society, he pursued its shadow from antiquity to antiquity more remote until at last he came upon the human tribe eating its bread in friendliness and enjoying the salubrious air of "the state of nature." Fortified by this vision, he called upon men to claim their long-lost patrimony. How they had lost it, he could not say; but say he could, and say he would, how to regain fraternity. His problem, as he conceived it, resolved itself into the possibility of having both fraternity and liberty. Brotherhood he achieved by proving that men can be happier co-operating, can get more for themselves by being fraternal, than otherwise. Uniting thus, as he says, utility and justice, he makes brotherhood plausible. But what becomes of liberty? It is certainly lost for common mortals. Men are free when they obey themselves; but they must recognize their own voice, however unfamiliar it may

sound, in the echo of some metaphysical general will. In actual practice this hypostatized general will must be represented, if not by a majority, then by something less than a majority. Of course, the upshot of this line of reasoning is, as Rousseau himself admits, that in crucial cases men must be "compelled to be free." Thus does modern theory shake hands with ancient tyranny in taking the easy way with dissenters.

And so it appears that the secular prophets of brotherhood have dealt little less rigorously with liberty than have the sacred ones. The spiritual seers, despairing of brotherhood on earth, have uniformly laid its preserves in heaven; but there, as an ancient legend went, aspiration for freedom was ignominiously crushed by stern omnipotence. That is, the liberty envisaged by both sacred and secular crusaders is the liberty to agree; and the strength of their fraternity has been measured by the force available for the repression of dissent. Such liberty is, of course, no liberty at all; and fraternity that is not safe for liberty is not safe for men.

## II

In the light of age-old practice harsher even than these repressive theories, it is well that the modern democratic movement elevated liberty to its place in the sun. And it is but natural under the circumstances that the ideal should have been interpreted as it was. In pursuing these two lines of inquiry, let us first note what the ideal meant to the democratic pioneers and afterward inquire into the nature and sanctions of liberty. Both in France and in America—the two countries that had to initiate democracy by violence—the emphasis was upon the negative aspect of freedom. Since men had been bound, naturally their first thought was to rid themselves of their bonds. These were not merely oppressive taxation, gross invasion of personal rights, insulting executive neglects, irresponsible hazarding of lives in war, legislation disdainful of peace and property as well as neglectful of pressing needs. All these there were, to be sure, in measures that would be both astonishing and intolerable to us who have lived to see so many things al-

lowed. But there were also more subtle bonds the extent of which our fathers themselves discerned but vaguely. Where the regulation and restraint by princes left off, there the deeper influence of priests set in. And if any spontaneous tracts of conduct escaped the two, there remained as ally of each, omnivorous custom whose age outran the memories of men. Though for average mortals it was a time in which things were not allowed, doubts could not be wholly stifled. Yet thinking left men uneasy and foreboding. Deep tremors from pent-up energy broke the crust of medievalism here and there; but from the rents evil eyes peered out, devils ascended and descended, while divine judgments still rumbled low. Life was a spiritual thraldom; and for the more external restrictions there stood conscience as a terrifying representative inside the very citadel of the soul.

It is small wonder, therefore, that when the stirrings of self-assertion moved them to protest, our fathers thought the one thing needful was to rid themselves of bonds. It

certainly was the first thing needful. Men would be good if only they could be left unhampered. Life needed no program, except iconoclasm toward the past. The clutches of its icy hand once broken, the future would take care of itself. Sweep away the old order, insure against its return by written bills of rights, and the millennium would already have arrived.

> The loathsome mask . . . . fallen, the man remains
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself; just, gentle, wise.

We have lived long enough to experience some of the disillusionment that followed from this interpretation of liberty. But no disappointment should blind us to the fact that such negation is indispensable to the ideal of liberty. Liberty must, indeed, mean absence of external restraint before it can mean anything better. The very foundation of liberty in every age is effective struggle against tradition and custom and habit. The fear that Count Hermann Keyserling declares

drove him on the globe-trotting journey so interestingly described in his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* might well make pilgrims of all democrats—the fear of losing the spontaneity that is naturally ours in habits and customs not genuinely our own. And especially does such a pioneer conception of freedom afford protection to every generation of youth.

What habit has made easy and necessary to adults may become genuine restriction to those whose spontaneity is our only hope for discovering better ways of living. The rebellion of youth is, therefore, not only its salvation, but the salvation also of those against whom it rebels. If youth and other protesters could not slowly force social change, then nature would do violently what she has provided a slow, peaceful, and constructive way of achieving through the peaceful pressure of those who are limited by our petrifaction. As C. Delisle Burns so well puts it, "The moral right of rebellion is the life-blood of any community." The democratic way of life must recognize and inculcate the necessity of rebellion, as Jefferson long ago

thought. Vicarious experience, whether in religion or in politics or in economics or in family life, belongs to an older ideal. The democratic ideal must insist upon fresh experience for every man, and the only way to achieve it is to encourage toward the limitations of every age the critical attitude taken by our democratic forefathers toward the tyranny of their time. This attitude is the minimum demand of the liberty ideal.

## III

But already this brings us to a discussion of the positive content of liberty and to a further consideration of its sanctions. Life and spontaneity are so nearly synonyms that they may answer for each other. From the simplest cell of quivering protoplasm up to the highest activity of life as mind, ceaseless change is the law of the living. To hamper this spontaneous flow is to benumb that whose essence is sensitivity; and to canalize too narrowly the restless goings and comings of vitality is to challenge the very constitution of all living forms. A certain capacity

for variation, for growth, in short for freedom, is thus foundational to the whole animate order. Over against this order stands as its first limitation inanimate nature. In the crevices and the oases of the material, the vital mysteriously appeared and pluckily survived. But it survived at a price—the price of capitulation. Nature chasteneth her final and fairest child with a call to penance—adaptation to unyielding matter. And yet starting with fire filched from forbidden altars, man, imbued with the curious sagacity of all his simpler kin, has now and then outwitted even nature herself. He has caught breath hot from her heaving vitals and hurled it against rolling wheels to carry him fast as the wind. He has harmonized the magnetic clashings of her vast energies and interthreaded her loves and hates to make brilliantly illuminated habiliments for her colossal frame. For long he has whispered to his comrades across her ultimate slime, and in these latter days his words have shot unguided through the farthest reaches of earth's illimitable ether.

What seemed for many ages so complete a barrier to human aspiration as to challenge hardly more than resignation has thus with further knowledge turned to wings wherewith we fly. And yet we fly only within nature's preserves, subject as yet to many hazards. At our craftiest, our cautious mother does yet set barriers to our aspirations. But modern men find joy in experimenting and even in audaciously challenging nature's final nay. The creative career that has rendered hopefully uncertain the ultimate extent of what I have called the first barrier to freedom —natural limitations—has all too clearly revealed the nature and menace of what we may now call the second barrier—social limitations. And strangely enough this latter barrier is constituted by human fear of human advance.

Here indeed begins what chiefly makes up the problem of freedom for a democratic way of life. Men have adapted themselves easily, and with no little contentment, to natural limitations just because they are natural. And yet how poor a thing have nature's

denials often made of human life! Leopardi's fine lines give universal voice to this sentiment.

> Noble indeed is he
> Who dares to lift his mortal eyes and gaze
> Full at our common fate,
> And with unfettered tongue,
> Concealing naught of truth,
> Admits the evil given as our lot,
> Our low and frail estate;
> Who ever proves himself,
> In suffering, great and strong,
> Nor sets on man the blame for human grief,
> Adding thereby to all our weight of woe
> A burden heavier still: hatred and wrath
> Of those that should be brothers—
> But gives the blame to her
> Whose is the guilt—to her whom mortals call
> Their "mother" nature, though she is indeed
> Step-mother in her malice.

In moments of social awakening, such as followed the Renaissance and eventuated in the modern democratic movement, common men come to see and feel with poets the pity of exacerbating natural limitations by the added bitterness of man's inhumanity to

man. And nerved negatively by this pity of seeing human life poorer than it might be and positively by splendid visions of what life might become if men in human friendliness would make the best of natural difficulties, they write liberty upon their banner and march against whatever social restraints have aroused their ire.

It is highly interesting and very significant that these two enemies of freedom grow strong together. Indeed they are not so clearly two as the preceding analysis has made them seem. The social milieu is the one, as we have seen in the foregoing chapter, that swathes human life from earliest infancy. So intimate is this social mediation of the natural that it easily assumes the guise of the natural. Second nature when well matured is oftentimes as unyielding as nature herself at first hand. Thus have favored men sought to invoke nature's inexorableness at her worst as a sanction for their motivated withdrawal of liberties from less favored ones. And thus the borderline between the natural limitation to liberty and the social limitation is in

all history a relative one. The former makes so effective a sanction, just because it is at any given time inexorable, that the latter borrows and capitalizes it. And so violation of old custom everywhere becomes a violation of the law of nature. A single example will make this clear as daylight. The voluntary limitation of families by what is now popularly called "birth control" is conceived in certain quarters as a violation of natural laws. Moved deeply by inherited inertia, seasoned with fear, and made active by some half-confessed mercenary interest—such as the need of soldiers for war or of cheap labor for industry—men oppose with a desperation born only of blindness what is practiced normally and wholesomely by thousands and what alone can give hope to millions. But they oppose it in the name of nature, and threaten more intelligent men than themselves with the wrath of God. And so it comes about that the many are doomed to poverty through over-sized families that the few may fatten on their rights. The more

men restrict one another's liberties the less is nature subdued to the needs of men. Indeed, when men repress one another nature oppresses them all.

We have now supplemented our initial reason for holding liberty as a fundamental ideal in our democratic way of life. First we saw that it is the very nature of life to feel its way; protoplasm itself is distinguished by sensitivity and spontaneity. Thus is liberty constituted, as was argued also regarding fraternity, a sort of natural end for life. And now it begins to be clear that since human life cannot be full until a reluctant nature is forced to contribute the means, the keeping of human life free from social restraint becomes an indispensable means to this necessary end. Thus is social liberty extrinsically justified as a human good. Man's effectiveness against nature goes *pari passu* with his relief from social constraint. But it remains to emphasize what is more important still, i.e., the deep enjoyment of human relations that such freedom makes possible.

## IV

The burden of our discussion of fraternity was the great utility and the deep joy of human intercourse. That song we need not now repeat. It is enough for our present purpose if we but catch its refrain—that men cannot be strong, that they will not be happy, except as they draw their strength and happiness from the fountain of friendliness. But men cannot catch inspiration from the praise, or find correction in the blame, of those who are less free than themselves. So elemental a truth is this that it hardly needs emphasis.

All aristocratic societies have sought full living in a small group of free men, but have then thought to keep their riches untarnished by the rusty vulgarity of the many. But it is a sort of nemesis that slavery corrupts the master as it degrades the slave. Men can be free only as they live among freemen. The adjustment that inexorably goes on where liberty is graded is always a leveling down of those most free. But this is a moral whose every aspect we shall examine

when we come to discuss the third of the democratic graces, equality. We insist for the time being only upon the single fact that liberty feeds only upon its like: really to be free, men must live among freemen.

The extension of liberty from the few to the many that has gone on so steadily in democratic times is thus but a gesture—albeit a dimly conscious one—of self-preservation. Men have learned to guard their freedom by sharing it. And as a beneficent, natural response to this socializing process, liberty itself has grown from more to more. Liberty of motion passes over to liberty in property. To these have been added freedom of conscience. And last, they all flower into freedom of thought over the whole field of life. An intelligent modern will fight earnestly for, and be deeply perturbed by the violation of, his right to think as he pleases. It was not always so. Liberty has become so fine a thing only with its socialization into a universal right. As I write this chapter on liberty, there comes the news that an American state has convicted and penalized one of

its teachers for making available to his students the current scientific account of human development. And at the same time there is becoming available in the public press a report by an American scientist upon the barbarous treatment of natives in Portuguese Africa. The latter is a story of abductions, of enforced labor, of whippings, of assaults; the former is a story of the violation of a much more attenuated right—the right to think freely and to express one's thoughts for the nurture of the next generation. And yet it is safe to say that among those ambitious for human advancement the gross violation of liberty in Portuguese Africa will not cause more solicitude than the more refined violation of liberty in America. And this not merely because the former is far away and concerns primitive peoples that are not white, but also because it is clearly seen that if freedom of speech is imperiled, thinking itself cannot remain permanently free. And when thinking is estopped, action itself grows more and more restrained until at length man falls again a victim to natural

forces that with free thinking, but only therewith, he had learned to subdue for noble ends. Thought itself, like every manifestation of life, is spontaneous and must be allowed to find its way limited only by the natural barriers which with every encouragement it still cannot completely control. To tell a man what to think is in every long run the working equivalent of telling him not to think at all.

## V

There will no doubt be many readers of the foregoing discussion of liberty whose chief reaction will be one of perturbation. It will seem to them that the one resultant of all that has been said is that liberty means that one must be allowed to think as he pleases, to speak as he pleases, to act as he pleases. This, they will say, is anarchy camouflaged with noble words. At least it is an impossible ideal—an ideal that is self-defeating in the social order. I am not without understanding of their point of view and not entirely lacking in sympathy for what

they say. But it has been said before. Indeed it must have been the first word spoken in the "dim, red dawn of man." The profound and distressing problem that is involved here is one that can be more nearly solved by confidence and frankness than by fear and indirection. And so to all such objectors, I reply: "To do as one pleases—this alone is liberty."

Qualifications may now be added; but the qualifications are not meant singly or jointly to negate the statement itself. Shall one give poison to a child who pleases to have it? No; but so long as the child pleases to have it and yet is denied it, so long is he not allowed to be free in this regard. Nor is the case materially different when applied to an adult. To deny alcohol to a man who wants it is to curtail his liberty, however injurious the alcohol. It may not be so pious, but it is surely more ethical, to admit that we violate the liberty ideal when we actually do so. But what justification can we allege for the violation? In terms of the democratic ideals under discussion, we may say that we restrict

liberty only in the name and for the sake of fraternity. This is an intelligible apologetic and one that historically is highly respectable. It is on the whole the religious justification for limited liberty. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." Idealism in ethics has also, on the whole, made fraternity the rightful boundary of liberty. The fact is held to be that society is an organic unity; the imperative, that spiritual unity must be achieved. Individuality arises from the social matrix; and self-assertion should not be allowed, even as liberty, to poison the fountain whence it issues. In short, individuality must not be allowed to bankrupt sociality. We ourselves in earlier discussion have suggested the fraternity ideal as corrective of the liberty ideal. Rather, however, than sacrifice liberty to fraternity, we should on the whole be inclined to demand that fraternity fulfil itself in liberty. Social cement tends to harden into tradition that in time defeats the potentialities of brotherhood itself. Since "all experience

hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed," we must throw the weight of our emphasis upon the side of flexibility. Since men can be brothers on different levels, it is always socially safer to lay upon them the duty of learning how to be fraternal with the free. To permit a man to disagree with one's opinions and contradict one's practices and to love him still enriches fraternity as it also deepens liberty. Toleration is the virtuous ensign of growth.

But the limitations made necessary by our bold definition of liberty as the doing what one pleases can be pronounced also in the name of equality. It was in this manner that utilitarian ethics in general thought to make liberty safe. Each man's liberty extends up to where the other man's liberty begins. Liberty is intrinsically good, its denial is always bad, and limitation can be justified only in the name of the equal right of other men to be free. As between the idealistic and the

utilitarian emphases we must choose the latter. Indeed, our subsequent treatment of equality will make pivotal this view that as liberty is necessary for a worthy brotherhood, so equality is the only guaranty of liberty for common men. But in addition to a salutary emphasis upon equality as the sanction of liberty, the utilitarians left us also in their debt by making liberty mean something so definite as forever to explode the pious sophism of compelling men to be free. They saw that liberty must be stripped naked if it is to be cleared of parasites. And so they, too, made liberty mean no less than doing as one pleases. The fundamental insight achieved in this is that man's emotional nature is primary. Out of it arises all human values, and from violations of it originate all human woes. If we do not base liberty upon desire, then liberty rests upon a floating foundation that may be transported wherever pious tyranny wills. If another may give the lie to our pleasures and pains, then indeed is the human shrew tamed and thenceforeward may thick-skinned Petruchios

bloat themselves with meaningless acquiescence though they flaunt the decalogue. Better to bear a thousand outer tyrannies than once to doubt that only one's preferences make both the warp and woof of his goods. Every man may be more than a hedonist but no man dare be less. Returning to the conception of liberty that we share with the utilitarians, it does not mean that one is always free when doing as he pleases (for his desires may contradict each other), but it does mean that he is never free when not doing as he pleases. And the utilitarians were eternally right in emphasizing this.

But no farther can we follow them so gladly. Liberty must, for a fact, consist in doing as one pleases; but one's pleasure is a very pliable thing, far more flexible than their rigid view of human nature allowed. Because the utilitarians thought that man naturally seeks merely his own pleasure, liberty was to them a disintegrating factor. Since the utilitarians insisted that men ought to be free, they had to resort to very harsh measures in order to counteract what they

felt to be the divisive trend of liberty. Law with its rigorous penalties darkened the threshold of every individualistic door, and the sulphurous fumes of a hell not too far away opportunely floated in at crucial moments. We can accept all the more gladly their insight since we are prepared to correct their errors. Because we have grown up in a more humane era, we know better than could they that men's inclinations are social as well as selfish. And we know that selfish inclinations can by wise nurture be socially inclined, even as they knew by experience that men can be made self-centered. They blazed the way; we may cultivate the land.

The agricultural metaphor is not without precision. Our American pioneers thought that they must have spreading acres on which to make a living. To ask them to support their families by cultivation of a few acres of land would have been curtailing their liberty (agriculturally speaking) to a ridiculous extent. Their conception of liberty, like their conception of tillage, was extensive. Farm as you please with no neigh-

bors to bother; do as you please and objectors be damned. But by changing the ideal of farming from extensive to intensive and by applying the same good sense to the size of families, many not remote descendants of these same wide-spreading, heavy-breeding pioneers are enjoying more liberty on a few acres of land with two or three well-cared-for children than their forbears realized out of a half section of the former and a houseful of the latter.

## VI

In discussing the nature of liberty we do well to emphasize the foregoing suggestion about its nurture. There are not a few serious students of current American life who are alarmed over what they regard as the yearly encroachment of social control, even of legislative enactment, upon liberty. Some of this solicitude is engendered by economic interests whose complete freedom means hardly less than industrial bondage to many. Some of it arises from the curtailment of personal appetites whose gratification makes for so-

cial inefficiency. As rights are denied that have been found socially injurious and as opportunities are distributed that have hitherto been monopolized, it is inevitable that the interests involved will cry for liberty when thus summoned to judgment. Their liberty is no doubt restricted. So far, so bad. But it is never sufficiently enlightening simply to say that liberty is being curtailed until one knows whose liberty and whether it has fattened upon the liberties of others who now deserve a hearing. However much exclusive and pernicious interests cry, the courts of democracy must be bold to overrule their objections. We have seen that the fraternity ideal demands it; we shall see that the equality ideal compels it; and we are now prepared to say that the liberty ideal itself justifies it. For if liberty for some is good, is not liberty for all better?

The eighteenth amendment to the federal constitution is the outstanding current example cited by those who foresee the death of American liberty. It does no doubt restrict the liberty of many people; but if a man does

not want liquor, his freedom is not only not infringed by prohibition, but it may actually be curtailed by the absence of prohibition. Now a majority of the American people believe, rightly or wrongly, that the rights of many—economically as well as domestically—have long been injured by the easy availability of liquor; and so they believe that by protecting these even prohibition can show a favorable balance of liberty. Moreover, they believe that more liberty can be found in wants substitutable for the desire to drink; and so they hope to control the present generation sufficiently while it is dying off to train future generations without the desire for alcohol.

At least, sympathetic consideration of such a point of view is perhaps the best way to prepare oneself spiritually for what seems inevitable. It is highly probable that as science uncovers to us new sources of human injury and new methods of exploiting natural resources we shall each have to content himself with a smaller and smaller sphere of anarchy—as personal liberty was

called by a late individualistic American. Further increase of population over most of the world will but serve to hasten this outcome. But it is no matter to be grieved over except by the sentimental and the selfish, even though it does involve a departure from our pioneer tradition. Tradition should not too long outlive the conditions that produced it. The only constructive way to face this prospect is to get ready to adapt ourselves to its necessary demands. Aristotle declared that the chief good philosophy had done him was to enable him to accept willingly what other people had to accept protestingly. What philosophy can do for some men the pliability of youth makes possible for all. Each new generation, while it feels its liberty curtailed in enough respects, does not usually waste tears over what the older generation thought to be its own utter ruin. Men tend to habituate themselves in their nonage to satisfactory living within their preserves. On one side this marks the danger of education. But on the other side it thrills one with the unlimited possibilities of a gen-

eration wise enough to train its young for democratic living.

Liberty is indeed doing as one pleases; but all hope for a democratic way of life arises from the fact that through proper training men may actually more and more please to share their joys with one another in friendly intercourse. This is the meaning of the supreme emphasis that democracies put upon education. It is upon the pliability of human nature that all progress depends, and education is the measure through which men dare to press from democratic government to the democratic way of life. But this audacious confidence is conditioned by the nature of education. If it is to regard knowledge as something achieved the transmitting of which is its function, then will the past with its bondage be perpetuated. When light itself turns darkness how great is the darkness! But if educators can come to regard knowledge as an enterprise in which each generation seeks to fit more nearly its own environment and further to humanize it for the next, then living might become such an ex-

periment as would humanize life itself. The educational situation amid much darkness is not without comforting signs. Adult education has come to banish the notion that education fits one for the future, and the many experiments in liberty education have come to teach the human species while young how to do intensive tillage. Since liberty is doing as one pleases, no one can be permanently free until he learns how to live with his fellows; for above all things else man pleases to please others. Legal restraints and theological terrors have but symbolized in external grotesquery the sanctions that lie deep within human nature itself. To please themselves most deeply and most permanently men must manage somehow to be socially congenial. Liberty is, therefore, not lessened, but rather increased, by the early development of those desires which are compatible with the desires of others with whom one must live and work. Moreover, since liberty is doing as one pleases, no one can be substantially free who in gratifying one part of his nature outrages another part, or in pleasing himself to-

day humiliates himself tomorrow as he looks back upon the work that he has wrought. "The real sin," as a contemporary psychoanalytic poet declares, "consists in being divided against yourself, in wanting one thing and doing another." Freedom, indeed, demands not only an external brotherhood, but it also imperatively demands an inner harmony. And on the whole the two go together. The house divided against itself cannot stand against the world; but the surest way to heal inner discord is to come to terms with one's fellows. A unified personality in a harmonious world—this is a psychological statement of the democratic objective.

A moral ideal that age finds too hard may have a fair chance with youth. If we could learn how to train our children in such a way that they will not be at outs with their world, so that they will not have constantly in reverie to be running away from themselves, or from their families, or from their neighbors, we should have done a thousandfold more for liberty than men have ever done in the past. A man's liberty, in very

truth, is not measured by the abundance of things that he possesses and guards, but rather by the calmness of spirit and the harmony of soul with which he surveys his own well-cultivated personality patch and the sharable happiness with which he looks across the equally well-cultivated patches of his neighbors. He who has thus been freed is free indeed.

# DEMOCRACY AS EQUALITY

*Chapter IV*

# DEMOCRACY AS EQUALITY

## I

NOTHING is more certain in the realm of human relations than that a substantial measure of equality conditions significant brotherhood. Equality is, indeed, so close a counterpart of the fraternal ideal that it may almost be said to be a part of it rather than a means to it. If two men have been bosom friends in poverty and one of them becomes wealthy, their friendship is the normal sacrifice exacted by the "God of Things as They Are." If close contact is artificially maintained for a time between those who are grossly unequal, there goes on a leveling that is both psychological and spiritual. Those who are much and closely together build characters that are in very truth joint products. If a slave is raised by association with a superior master, then the master is lowered by association with the inferior slave. The Assyrian con-

queror on the bas-relief, as Herbert Spencer was fond of pointing out, is himself tied to the rope by which he leads the prisoners. In a way that religion has thought mystic, a new presence seems to arise where two or three are gathered together in any name, if only they are at peace.

The only way in which fraternity can be maintained along with substantial inequality is by postulating a transempirical equality. This is what humane minds have always done when confronted with the ideal claim of brotherhood on one side and with the fact of gross inequalities on the other. The Stoic Seneca, face to face with the vast discrepancy between humane theory and actual practice, declared:

> He errs who thinks that slavery goes to the heart of man. For the better part of man is unaffected. Bodies are under the power of a master and are counted as his, but the mind is free. It is so untrammelled indeed that it cannot be held down even by those prison walls within which it is shut, but may burst out to great deeds and flee to the infinite as a comrade of the divine.

St. Paul took the same devious route to maintain human brotherhood in the face of slavery: "in Christ there is neither bond nor free." Southern apologists for slavery but yesterday in our own country found a justifying voice that echoed all the past when Professor Bledsoe declared that

> the poorest slave on earth possesses the inherent and inalienable right to serve God according to his own conscience; and he possesses it as completely as the proudest monarch on his throne. The master demands no spiritual service of him, he exacts no divine honors.

But when equality is thus saved in the face of the facts, by transporting it to heaven, let it be noted that fraternity is also laid in other than earthly scenes. If the one is purely ideal, then ideal must be the other also. It is only when equality is actual that fraternity abides among men in significant measure. This is a relationship that need not be labored, for in general it is never denied. It has been so far emphasized only because some have thought to save spiritual brotherhood by asserting a mystic equality that underlies

actual inequality. This can be done, but the spiritual brotherhood thus preserved is of no more durable texture than the intangible equality that conditions it.

## II

When we come to the relation between liberty and equality, however, there is a different story. That there is some relationship has always been observed; but its exact nature has been a matter of dispute. We shall note the divergent opinions only in so far as such notice will throw light on our present contention; and that contention is that what the equality ideal has stood for is necessary in order to make significant liberty available for the majority of men. Even those who have been most sympathetic with democracy have often felt that the insertion of equality in its aims produces an embarrassment, and many professing democrats have declared in every age that liberty and equality cannot dwell together. Thus saying, they have all too often declared that equality must therefore go, since liberty is the dearest of the

democratic graces. The historic explanation of this partiality for liberty has been discussed in the preceding chapter. There is, however, no imperative reason why, circumstances changed, the emphasis may not be shifted from liberty to equality.

It is indeed notable that the willingness to surrender equality does not usually imply any desire to undo any of the equalitarian victories already consummated. Each man to count for one at the ballot and before the law and nobody to count for more than one at either place—these are everywhere in America regarded as praiseworthy achievements of the democratic impetus. But the willingness to surrender equality is forward-looking. Having attained by way of equality the political and legal means for greater and more concrete benefits, many voices are counseling that we should now reap in economic fields the fruits of our earlier political sowing. It is primarily against this tendency that men who fear for liberty disclaim. They point out that liberty demands that each is entitled to whatever he can get in a competi-

tive field where no favors are shown. Not only is this principle sound as a principle, they say, but it is an absolutely necessary condition of progressive practice. The fundamental error involved in invading the economic field with an equalitarian program is, according to them, twofold. First, men are economically so different as to be of greatly varying value to the productive process. Second, the only way to marshal the entire economic resource is to let each man profit by his varying gifts. There is no other motive adequate to the high productivity demanded by our modern needs. To initiate a program looking toward equalization of either wealth or of income is, they say, to invite disaster.

When it is pointed out that such a policy as that advocated by the partisans of liberty involves many people in poverty, it will be replied, if the apologist for the present order be tough-minded, that life is no holiday, that men usually deserve what they get, and that nothing good comes except through sacrifice. If the apologist be tender-minded, he will regret the high cost of progress, he will com-

miserate the victims; he may even insist upon giving alms or bonuses. Beyond this, even if he be tender-minded, what can he do? Born into a world not made for him, man must manage the best he can; and, as for the rest, a stiff upper lip is an indispensable asset.

If one take all this apologetic in utter good faith, he must concede that our case regarding the dependence of liberty upon equality is made out. For the unfortunates whose condition is in debate have no substantial liberty. Liberty is good; their lot is evil. If one wished to be particularly ironic, he might resurrect the old spiritual palliative and endow the unfortunates with freedom of the will. But all in all we are far enough along to admit that a man who has no other kind of freedom has not even freedom of the will. The only freedom worth talking about is the ability actually to try out one's desires and plans and the ability to escape unforeseen consequences. The one ability exists only with economic independence, the other only with a liberal education. The only freedom that exists for submerged classes is the free-

dom to resent or to accept their poverty and ignorance, and to get what satisfaction they can from a religious faith well adapted to protect the more fortunate classes from violence.

This is all, of course, a matter of more or less, but the number of people involved in the United States today who lack significant freedom must give one pause. The most dependable statistics available—from the National Bureau of Economic Research—indicate that less than 2 per cent of our people own more than 60 per cent of our national wealth. This means of course prodigious liberty for 2 per cent; for wealth is power and prestige to do all that liberty has ever meant, both good and bad. But note that it also means that the remainder of our people—the 98 per cent—own less than 40 per cent of our wealth, of which a great majority own nothing at all, not even tools with which to work. In the great economic inequality their liberty evaporates. But clearly, though wealth be very inadequately distributed, income is more to the point. Here, fortunately,

inequality is not so flagrant. Still, how much liberty can one enjoy on less than a living wage? Almost half of all American families lived in 1910 on incomes of $700 or less; and while the peak in 1917 seemed much higher, it meant in actual purchasing power less than $1,000 at the highest. There is no need to exaggerate. This does not constitute starvation, but on the other hand it is not the framework for the kind of life envisaged by our fathers, when democracy was young. And what is more to the point, it is not the framework for the kind of life that could actually be had today by means of a juster distribution of available goods and opportunities. Without arguing the latter point here, enough has been said to make it unmistakably clear that when men demand liberty to the exclusion of equality, they mean liberty for the few, dependence for the many.

Liberty that is compatible with slavery is not liberty. Liberty that is yoked with poverty is not liberty. To call it by its right name puts the matter in far clearer light. If one will but consider the relation to eco-

nomic poverty of the chief goods that are prized by those who are not poor, the whole point will appear unshakable. Wealth itself is a good and the getting of it is oftentimes a joyous activity. The poor have no liberty in this regard, of course, since by definition they have just this deficiency. Health, another fundamental good of human life, is possessed by the poor in fairy tales alone. Health in a modern industrial society is conditioned quite fully by things which for the most part poverty denies—rest, light, wholesome food, physiological knowledge, ready access to physicians, dentists, hospitals. The poor cannot own objects of beauty; and, what is worse, they have no adequate access to such educational opportunities as really make available the free beauties of art galleries, of museums, of earth and sky. Friendship itself, the freest of all goods, is not available to the poor on the same easy terms as to those better off; for friendship thrives on leisure, rest, imagination, tolerance, freedom. Variety throughout the whole of experience is another greatly prized human

good, but poverty denies travel, vacations, variety of food, new friends, and the thousand and one other things that economic independence affords to relieve the tedium of life. The situation is complicated in the case of the industrial poor by the insistent presence of highly monotonous work which in long hours grinds down both spontaneity and morale. It is further aggravated by the consequent fact that there is no intrinsic joy in their work itself to compensate for the enormous extrinsic lacks. To this point I shall return in a more constructive mood in a subsequent chapter; but for the present it must be left unmistakably clear that not merely is the attainment of separate goods made impossible by poverty, but that also there is left lacking that which underlies all these, the right to develop personality through the joyous assumption of responsibility in productive processes. Personalities are not handed down, they are grown; and the poor are denied the soil necessary for their nurture.

A touch of irony is added to this basic

denial by the fact that the age-old distinction between material and spiritual goods has actually served largely, whatever may have at various times been the motive of those who capitalized it, to content men with a life that had neither economic nor spiritual richness. Spirituality may be more than economic activity, but certain it is that it never flowers normally except through the latter. And any insistence upon a sharp separation of soul and body or even of body and mind will do for the poor to challenge. If a man permits his soul to become his exclusive joy, he will be fortunate if he does not some day wake to find that he has neither soul nor joy.

A life externally meager, internally dull—this is the supreme tragedy lived by a majority of the industrial children of those democratic pioneers who dreamed so short a time ago of a transformed society instinct with justice. All this ought to make clear what the eventuation is to be, regardless of the motivation back of it, of the tendency to give up equality as a part of the democratic in-

sistence. To give it up is to renounce fraternity and liberty at the same fell blow.

III

But how far are we to go, one may ask, in contradiction of the facts? Men simply are not equal and that is the end of all concrete discussion of the matter. Let it be replied that in the first place we are not talking about facts alone, but about facts and ideals. If men had never mixed with the facts such ideals as gradually changed the facts themselves, we should have now but few of the resources that go to make up what the modern man calls a good life. Our present purpose does not, therefore, obligate us to bow in adoration of the facts. But there is no reason on the other side why we should shrink from a consideration of the relation of the facts to the ideal that democracy has insisted upon. What can equality as an ideal mean in the light of the present facts that constitute its setting? Are we to answer, with Rousseau, that it is because men are unequal by nature that society ought always to aim to make

them equal? In a certain sense this represents the democratic spirit. We may admit that we cannot prove that men are equal, but we shall certainly go on to affirm that our case does not depend upon proving it. Even granting the prematurely bold assertion of a recent writer that "differential psychology utterly blasts the hopes of the older equality theorists," the question remains: How ought we to treat one another in order to facilitate the life that we want?

It is true that on the face of it our democratic fathers seemed to be concerned with more than this inquiry. As one critic has said, "In an evil hour for their cause, they took up a position which they thought to be strong because it was so exhaustive, and even by public declaration proclaimed 'equality of men.'" They not only made their declaration universal, but they tied it up with sanctions destined to be discarded. Men were created equal, they said; and now we know that men were not created at all, but happened and grew. Men are equal by nature, they said; and now nature has gone the way of

anthropomorphism. But what though gods grow old and die and nature turns inanimate with the passing years? It is to the eternal credit of the democratic pioneers that these myths of the age sat lightly upon their shoulders; and yet it compliments their practical sagacity that they used whatever ideational instruments effective action demanded. Jefferson and Franklin in America and their compatriots in France were deistic in a theistic, yea a calvinistic, age. While others bowed before a king with divine pretensions, they risked their lives for the rights of man. Overstatement can be pardoned when nothing else wins credence; superstition can be praised when used without dishonesty to free the superstitious. This is not to proclaim the fathers omniscient or products wholly beyond their time; but it is to do them the justice of calling attention to what they meant rather than what they said. Their actions make it probable that they meant hardly more by their assertion of universal equality than that the day of the common man had arrived. Kings and nobles and prelates had

grown colossal on usurped privileges. Thenceforward other men were to be considered in the distribution of opportunities and benefits. If the fathers erred, it was in claiming too little for common men rather than in claiming too much. They were not prepared to travel far the road they had so clearly pointed out. They left the actual work for others, at least some of them harboring the vague hope that other times would produce men as bold to apply, as they had been to declare, equality. We shall certainly establish continuity with them, if we honestly put the question, How ought we to treat one another in order to achieve the good life?

## IV

When we try honestly to answer that question, it is clear, as has already appeared, that, quite apart from any question of actual equality, we must treat men in some adequate sense as equals, since as democrats we want a world in which we can live peaceably together a full free life. But whose liberty do

we envisage? That of all men unless we welcome the paradox of sacrificing some men in the name of brotherhood. How far in quantitative terms our treatment of men is to approximate equality cannot be declared a priori. Further experimentation alone can tell us precisely what kind of world we want, and further experience motivated by sympathy for common men can alone inform us as to the most effective means thereunto. This confession of inability to make general ideals explicit is no weakness, save in a purely historical sense. It simply means that we must in the democratic process, as in every other, feel our way, and that in spite of pious asseveration the generations before us have not pushed the experiment very far.

Of course, we can say that the equality ideal must mean the further achieving and preserving of the ends already set in politics and law. But that cannot be more than a good beginning. Stated again in general terms, our equalitarian idea must mean fundamentally that whatever objects or activities are regarded as good must be admitted to

be as good when experienced by one person as when experienced by another. This means the belated passing of a certain ethical doctrine of vicarious experience. Certain things are good—and there has been little doubt or disagreement regarding their identity from Plato's day to ours, as may be seen by comparing the platonic list with that of any modern sociologist—but, according to this aristocratic view, a few persons by experiencing them fully for the many can make on the whole a richer world. This view has grown pious partly because of the obvious fact that the poor and ignorant are never in the nature of the case so sensitive to appreciation as are the wealthy and cultured. But the inference from this pietism is pernicious. And our equality ideal must mean that our treatment of men is not to be predicated on the capacity for enjoyment or profit which they have at any given time, ignoring their antecedents and opportunities, but, instead, that we must count for a fact the capacity that might be developed through the most intelligent treatment possible. This but means that no prac-

tice aiming at greater justice can ignore the fundamental fact that man is a growing animal and that his birthright is development itself. Our equalitarian formula must initially mean at least equality of consideration, in order that it may mean something more than this in the end. Only after long sustained treatment of a most humane type—certainly not before—can we pass intelligent judgment upon the more recondite question as to whether men are naturally equal. That is, we must follow Aristotle in preferring to base our judgments concerning men on their highest potentiality rather than upon any given actuality of attainment, though of course we must go far beyond Aristotle by applying this dictum to all men rather than to a few.

Moreover, for man to come to his highest and best he must have more than food and clothing and gregarious indulgence. It is men, not brutes, that we are here considering. The inexpugnable grain of truth in Aristotle's characterization of man as a rational animal is this: man is capable of becoming an

end-guided animal. Like other animals he is sometimes merely pushed from behind by impulse or habit; but he has in addition the capacity of being drawn by visions of the desirable that spring out of his lacks. Upon the basis of this capacity Immanuel Kant demanded that every man should be treated as an end, never as a mere means. Now, to treat every man as thus prescribed is to permit him to regulate his conduct by ends that are genuinely his rather than someone else's handed down to him. This denial of first-hand experience is the most dishonoring form the inequality ideal has taken in the past, and it is largely because of its relation to this that poverty itself must be remedied if democratic ideals are not to be constantly mocked. In every field of life heretofore, the rule has been for a few men alone to catch the visions of what is to be done and then to ask other men blindly to further these visions. Most of the work of the world has been done without the workers having any clear notions as to what ultimate purpose their work was to subserve. Not only in manual labor is this true; but social

and even religious ideals have been handed down to the majority of men as too sacred for anything except literal application. The equality ideal must mean this highly important thing that every man shall be entitled to understand and progressively to create the ends for which his energy goes. And this means of course that he is entitled to the kind of character that can create and appreciate purposes that outrun the moment.

## V

The two greatest enemies of the recognition of this part of the equality ideal are war and industrial autocracy. War, whether the acute form of actual strife or the chronic form called militarism, makes it practically necessary for most men to become as much alike as possible in order that, like efficient machines, they may be readily massed for any emergency. The routine itself is adequate on the whole to deprive them of the alertness that makes them want to know what it is all about; but apart from this there must be studied secrecy regarding the aims to be pro-

moted by this or that activity. Even in the world-war, in which it became necessary for the sake of morale to let soldiers in on the larger "war aims," every soldier will remember the new experience of always being about something the use of which was quite unknown. The baseless, fabulous rumors that pervade army camps are testimonial to the fact that men cannot wholly abdicate their rational nature to military emergencies. But long apprenticeship to routine could succeed practically in deadening this one human power that all men have in varying degree. War, therefore, is absolutely at strife with the minimum demand of the equality ideal. Its grosser overt offenses against the ideal may be allowed to stand forth as self-evident.

Hardly less at variance, however, is the form of industrial organization that heretofore has given efficiency to our economic production. The ends to be served by the entire industrial process have been on the whole external to most men because they were ends of private profit and unsharable pleasures, in ignorance of which the workers must remain

if they were to work on unrebelliously. Nothing short of the progressive sharing by all men who work in the immediate and remote ends that their energies serve can satisfy the equality ideal. Whatever else may be given to or done for men, they are being offered the worst indignity of all if they are left in the dark as to what ideal purposes their lives further; for the deadliest essence of slavery is the cutting off of human beings from any creative participation in the processes they help to promote. How such participation can help redeem labor from drudgery will be disclosed in the following chapter.

But no earnest democrat could willingly leave equality with this most general delineation of its bearings. While only dogmatism could be utterly specific regarding the distribution of goods, yet honesty requires something more detailed upon this point.

## VI

Few theorists have ever thought for long of giving all persons exactly the same amount

of land or income or other property. The sheer engineering feat involved would be staggering, especially if one included in his aim the keeping of the amounts equal. But capitulation in this regard must not be taken as a rationalized defense of our present system of distribution. It is utterly imperative that if the ideals of democracy are to prevail there shall be a great impetus toward equalization of incomes at least. The impetus need not lead to a complete sameness of income; but it ought not to stop until it has achieved at least two objectives. The first may be formulated thus: *No leisure except upon the discharge of productive function.* And the second may thus be stated: *No one to have a superfluity until everyone has a wage adequate for life and growth.*

Let no exception be made as regards the first objective. In a world in which most people have to struggle and many to slave, there is in justice no room for idlers. Our formula is justified not merely by the fact that toil is intensified to many because of the number in our civilization who bear no part

—though that fact were in itself enough—but also by the further fact that there is no other way of developing the right sort of character except through a live participating interest in the active productive processes of mankind. Since most men must work, there is no other ground so potent for real brotherhood as is economically productive work. A few outside the process might be brothers to one another, but their fraternity would be so exotic that most men would be forever ineligible. They themselves would be also ineligible for the greater brotherhood; and so the democratic ideal of a cosmopolitan brotherhood is defeated at the beginning.

As household functions further decline and birth control further increases, the activity of women comes full under this stricture. If yachting and philandering are not forms of masculine productivity, then gossiping and card playing are not forms of feminine productivity. The physical and intellectual and moral fiber of "society" women indicates all too familiarly that what deprives society impoverishes the individual

also. For the sake of women themselves we must, therefore, bring them under our formula.

This insistence upon work as the basis of democratic fraternity is not to be interpreted as a resigned acceptance of the lowest level of co-operation in order to have any, but it serves to suggest that we must have such a transvaluation of values as to cease to feel that productive work is lowest. That view is a holdover of a system that connected work with slavery and social inferiority. And at that whole *weltanschauung*, democracy strikes a body blow. In the name, therefore, of equality we must refuse to let any men or women be superior enough to other men or women to live without participating in productive work.

We shall not be so inflexible, however, regarding exceptions to our other formula, that is, that everyone shall have a wage upon which he may grow. Some men's characters have been so warped by early training in the industrial deadening of work that they will prove as recalcitrant at the one end of the

scale as the idle rich at the other. Heroic measures may be necessary for some poor men and for some rich women. To make a living wage universal would probably, in spite of the fact that man is naturally an active animal, be inadequate to guarantee sincere participation in the productive process by all the poor. Democracy must not substitute for a small class of rich idlers a much larger class of poor idlers. We seldom allow men actually to starve in our present inequalities. We shall certainly not let them starve in a more democratic regimen; but we shall use the possibility of quasi-starvation to enlist men in a fair trial of the joy of productive work. Perhaps our equality maxim should go no further than to guarantee unconditionally what Bertrand Russell has called a "vagabond wage" for those who remain recalcitrant to the appeal to productive participation. Careful breeding and proper education would almost certainly decimate the vagabonds in two generations. But this small contingency aside, no one who shows a willingness to work and any smouldering desire

to learn and grow intellectually, artistically, aesthetically, shall be held down by economic lack when comes the democratic age.

Whether we shall have also under the dictation of the equality ideal to deal concretely with wealth as we have with income remains an open question. This is confessedly a more serious matter than to insist upon a more equal distribution of income, There is perhaps enough sound sense in the talk of those who feel that a strong economic motive is still necessary in order to guarantee a production adequate to our present needs, to give one pause in tampering too stringently with the distribution of wealth. But caution need not mean paralysis. Wealth spells power; its absence usually renders income insecure. Were it not for this latter fact inequality of ownership might even be encouraged in the name of efficiency. If ownership could be taken out of the competitive field, it might well be that rivalry could be enlisted for production rather than for acquisition. The dollar-a-year men in war time partially illustrate this principle. Certainly

the noblest objective of modern life is this proposed substitution of a creative impulse for the acquisitive one. Hope of this transition grows with the belief that even among men of wealth the strongest motive is not having but making money. If this belief be well founded, then the creative impulse is already deeply at work in the acquisitive field. If its supremacy could be assured, the unequal distribution of wealth could be counted as irrelevant to the processes of democracy. There is certainly no a priori reason for discouraging, indeed there is reason for encouraging, men who get fun out of economic manipulation to specialize therein. But through education, or through compulsion, the fruits of wealth must be more widely distributed. And long experience breeds the fear that some measure of compulsion will have to be our initial dependence even though educational transformation be our ulterior reliance.

## VII

Use, however, of the term "compulsion" as an alternative to education need not excite

undue alarm. There is every hope that we shall be able to make the transition in America peacefully. This hope will be seen to have a broad historical basis if anyone will take the trouble to note how far we have gone already through due and peaceful processes of legislation. Only a suggestion of our progress is here in order. But starting from a philosophy that, as Blackstone observed, made private property more sacred than general welfare, we have under an ever humanizing interpretation of the governmental police power elevated not only life but the good life above property. Corporations affecting public welfare are now subject to public regulation; and this regulation reaches to hours of labor, working conditions, and even to minimum wages. Such combinations of monetary interests as endanger public welfare through the destruction of competition are proscribed. And last, and greatest, the money made under conditions prescribed with an eye to public welfare is then taken, in ratios progressively greater as income increases, to run

government and to pay for public improvements.

Supplementing these legislative gestures, public opinion has through a growing friendliness raised labor unions and like direct means of defense and welfare from a state of outlawry to a station of respectability and constant effectiveness. Capitalistic autocracy and suppression have given way to industrial struggle, and strife is giving way gradually to deliberation and co-operation. The final victory of the eight-hour day in the most autocratic industry of modern times came without a complete showdown of industrial power and, what is more constructively hopeful, without a great lessening of wage per hour in the steel industry. Moreover, the surprisingly slight decrease of production under the shorter day indicates that justice when trusted may become capable of self-support. Public opinion becoming slowly effective has tempered the remote Supreme Court, and thus made officially respectable an attitude that has long been growingly popular.

Could this revolutionary change summarized in two paragraphs have come all at once, it would have been called stark socialism. Though it has come gradually, it is actually so great that Professor Burgess, lately dean of American political scientists, declares in a minor key that the American people through their government may now take what they will from whom they please as fancy dictates. But the democrat who has outgrown the infantile fear of names is likely to approve what has happened, and that enthusiastically. Still, all this change must not make the democrat too expectant of the millennium. It is only a vision through which he may renew his courage as he pauses for a moment. The remaining journey, if it must be through complete nationalization of wealth, is untried, if through public regulation of private ownership and management, long and uncertain.

Moreover, the democratic way of life is conditioned by a more fundamental issue than that of private versus public ownership. I refer to the cultural potentiality of eco-

nomic work, whether publicly or privately provided. In the next chapter we must examine more in detail the human significance of industry. Can the day's work of the average man in a machine age be made so intrinsically interesting as to be genuinely creative, self-expressional? On this question rests in large measure the validity of democratic ideals for concrete living today.

## VIII

We shall thus end in a more specific vein what so far has necessarily been general. The setting for our concrete inquiry is now complete. Fraternity is the great spiritual objective of the democratic way of life; liberty is the indispensable means to a meaningful brotherhood; and equality is but a reminder that if liberty is good for the few, it is also good for all. Thus is fraternity ennobled through liberty, and liberty generalized through equality.

# DEMOCRACY AND THE DAY'S WORK

*Chapter V*

# DEMOCRACY AND THE DAY'S WORK

SINCE labor is the one touch of nature that makes (almost) the whole world kin, one would suppose that those who have concerned themselves with the good life could not for a moment forget the concept of work. And yet this is just what the theorists seem constantly tempted to forget, not merely for a moment but always. Survey the long line of treatises on ethical theory from Plato to our time with this point in mind, and you will find that the good life which they present ordinarily connotes either quiescence or the activities of leisure rather than those of work.

## I

Of the Platonic ethics this is proverbial. Any preoccupation with productive work is, to Plato, an ethical compromise which the wise and good make as little as possible. Temperance, indeed, is to Plato doubly a

virtue because, while vindicating the right of the best to shun basic work, it also inculcates the duty of the less than best to do such work. The supreme Platonic good would be a life of leisure passed where "beauty shining in brightness" reflects the light that never was on land or sea.

The same judgment applies generally, though not so obviously, to Aristotelian ethics. Aristotle sees clearly that while happiness is the final ethical end, it can be attained only in activity. But it turns out that activity must be carefully defined in order to eventuate in happiness; for the good man "will be occupied continually . . . . in excellent deeds and excellent speculations." In the sequel, however, "speculation," rather than doing, gets the palm (as witnessed by the occupation of his deity, "to whom all action is petty and unworthy"); and the "deeds" in order to be adjudged "excellent" at all presuppose that the agent be already "duly furnished with external goods, not for any chance time," as he adds with caution, "but for a whole lifetime." Aristotle hurries

logically on to the grand conclusion that the goal of ethics "is a kind of speculation or contemplation" reserved for the gods and their favorites; to lesser breeds without the law there remain but ethical crumbs that fall from surfeited tables. Any consideration of the good life that builds upon an uncritical economics, as does Aristotle's, slams the door in the face of the common man. Overalls are not for banquet wear.

This aversion, or at least indifference, to productive work as material for the good life is characteristic also of Christian thought. The rewards of the Christian Beatitudes are put at the end of economically non-productive activities; and instead of exploiting work for its intrinsic values, Christians have traditionally sighed for the land of rest. God, according to the stories of the faithful, worked creatively for six arduous days and then rested forever from his labors; and Jesus approved Mary who sat at his feet rather than Martha who kept at the job. True, Christianity grew to emphasize the "dignity of labor"; but there is reason to think that this

was but to hallow with an epithet so as to get done work which without the attribution had no intrinsic part or lot in the good life. The heaven of our Christian tradition has not been a place in which workers would feel permanently at home.

The modern ethical theory that formulated itself in the phrase "my station and its duties," tended, in subordinating ethics to metaphysics, to make "my duties" means to the dignity of "my station" and "my station" means to a hierarchy of stations that finally headed up in an omnicompetent aristocracy—a mundane microcosm of a transcendental order in which all troubles found peace at last. Utilitarianism initially promised much; but running afoul of an atomistic psychology and a metaphysics of fixed categories, it finally avowed that a pleasure that came at the end of activity, instead of in the process, is the only moral good. Under this showing economically productive activity, such as is connoted by the term "work," became merely means to an outside end, and ethics the discipline of calculating what

maximum of pleasure could be got from what minimum of endeavor.

## II

How has it happened that ethical speculation has thus yoked the good life with leisure rather than with work? One answer is that ethics is concerned with ends, not with means; that ethics sets out the nature of the good life: its business is not to tell men how to realize the good life, but merely to make clear what it is. That this is not the real reason, I feel certain; that it is even a good reason, I doubt. The separation of means and ends has even less validity in ethics than elsewhere. It is in fact quite pernicious, because the *good* life must be at the same time a good *life*. To separate means from ends is, in ethics, to abstract life from living—that is, to condemn the majority of men to a mere existence in order that the few may live well. An eminent American humanist was recently heard to remark that the higher values, the absolute values, are available only to the leisured few. He felt called upon to explain,

however, that he was not excluding the majority of men from the values, but was merely stating facts. Well, democracy cannot view such statements with complacency; for they suggest that beyond the reason assigned for the neglect of work by theorists there lurks another and more significant reason.

This reason lies, I believe, in the circumstance that those who have written about the good life have lived apart from the drudgery of work. If not persons of leisure themselves, their work has fitted them to be apologists for those who do not have to work in order to live. If one reply to this insinuation that ethicists from Plato down have been teachers and that teachers are not notorious for the amount of their leisure, there are two answers. The first is that while teachers are not technically gentlemen of leisure, they have uniformly constituted a relatively honored profession whose work has been intrinsically interesting and meaningful. But the second reply is that, at least since the Peripatetics, teachers imply schools; and schools, build-

ings and equipment; and these, subsidies and endowments; and endowments, rich men; and rich men, leisure and adornment and the philosophy of life compatible therewith. Teachers and writers have been so much the beneficiaries of those who draw the major profits from, rather than those who do, the world's work, that it is only natural that the plot for the good life should have been, successively, laid in Athens rather than in Laurium; in heaven rather than on earth; in the castle rather than on the farm; in the will rather than in the muscles; in the consequences rather than in their production; in the country-house rather than in coke-town. Thinkers have in the main lived not in but beside the stream of life; and from its mossy banks have tended to see their own images in the water, to hear their music in its rippling waves, to see their fantasies in its iridescent dance under the silent moon. But those in the stream have had no time to observe the mossy banks; they have known that the rippling means not music but shallows; and they have been too weary at night to find out what the waves do

when moonbeams flit upon them. In so far as the coming of democracy into its own has meant a genuinely ethical transformation, interest has shifted from the few upon the banks to the many in the stream.

## III

The democratic way for thinkers to recognize this shift, and further it, would be to organize their statement of the good life around the notion of work. Such organization would furnish a nucleus for ethics that the common man could understand, and it would invite the co-operation of statesmen and economists.

Leaving, then, for an indefinite future such a formulation of the good life as would hold for all possible worlds, let us center our attention on formulating the conditions for a good life in this actual workaday world. To essay this in good faith is to see at once that the good life for actual men in this actual world is conditioned by the daily occupation. But such actual work as men, and especially women, must now do often inhibits

rather than facilitates the realization of the good life that democracy envisages. Out of the forty-one million gainfully employed in the United States today there are probably not one hundred thousand who find their work such that they would desire to continue it were they privileged to choose between the job and retirement on full pay. And the proportion would certainly be far less for those employed not gainfully, such as housewives.

For the solution of this dilemma two alternatives appear. The traditional solution, already presented and criticized in a general way, is to regard work as a necessary evil and turn to leisure as the hope of the good life. Traditionally we have talked of happiness and envisaged a holiday, in industry and legislation we have centered attention on ever shorter hours, in philanthropy we have built parks and exploited play, in religion we have patiently awaited "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." And in practice we have more or less reconciled ourselves to doing what we do not want to do

in order to get what we want, as though that path could ever lead us to the good life. Utilitarianism, our closest philosophical ally in the democratic experiment, has played disappointingly into this same tendency; because, putting the good outside of the productive process, it initially fortified the rising industrialism, which was destined for large masses of men to displace joy and pride in work by exclusive preoccupation with the wage paid at the end of the working week. This separation of means and ends operated powerfully to reduce one class to the status of means with little leisure, leaving the other class to claim the rewards of work with little obligation to work.

Two fundamental reasons emerge, however, to show that the good life cannot be found in leisure alone. In the first place, it is not possible for the mass of men to find a good life in leisure because it is not possible for them to get the leisure. True, Bertrand Russell and many other socialists think that with present technology the four-hour day awaits only the will to have it; but our gen-

eration and even our century must apparently regard such optimism as at best prophetic of a distant time. This physical reason is supplemented by a psychological one. Some sorts of work effectually inhibit the ethical utilization of leisure. I refer not primarily to that drudgery whose only spiritual affinity is jazz in leisure hours, but rather to any cutting off of workers from effective participation in the ends for which they work. The really human thing about man, as noted above, is the fact that his activity can become end-guided. If the worker is reduced to the status of a means and his teleological propensity is denied any goal except the extrinsic one of wage, the wage, however great, cannot redress the deep wrong to his personality involved in the denial; and no amount of leisure in which to spend the wage can purge the ethical toxins left by his daily degradation. To talk of "self-culture in the margin of life" is to talk pious bombast.

Let me not be understood as deprecating any scheme that aims to make more leisure time available. I do not begrudge any man

his jazz or his beer, if these in his off-hours are necessary to buck him up for his on-hours. The world's work must be done. What I do deplore is that the ethical woof which any man weaves during his on-hours should be of such a piece as to require this kind of warp to match and complete it. Men do attain a kind of practical consistency, whether they aim at it or not; and there are certain kinds of leisure which alone seem compatible with certain kinds of work. Leisure is excellent and is necessary for both health and good living; but it is not the place to put our emphasis if we aim at a reconstruction of society in the interest of a finer life for all.

## IV

If we could once rid ourselves completely of the delusion that the good life can be found exclusively in leisure, we should be better prepared to accept our second alternative—the stupendous task of humanizing work. In the face of the endless questioning of children the older students of human nature wrote down that the mind is passive;

and in the face of the ceaseless play of children the older economists wrote down that men are lazy. But for these paradoxes there was no doubt a reason. Our forbears had seen the heaven that hallowed infancy fade with growth into the light of common day. Nature met and conquered them. Man's growing mastery of nature is an achievement almost of today; but it is ours in ever enlarging measure. Steam and electricity and gas and oil wait upon us day and night. Machines have done much for us: they must be made to do much more. For the first time in human history the hope need not be fatuous that work for the many may, through careful training, correct placement, and scientific management, be sufficiently humanized as no longer to defeat the good life. The professions already stand as testimonials to the fact that great sections of human activity have been made into work that would in many cases continue to challenge man's creative impulse even if his acquisitive instinct were paralyzed altogether. The Guild Socialists and the English Labor Party are

astute in demanding that honest men shall not rest until the spirit of the professions has leavened the whole area of non-professional work. The labor unions in America are feeling for a similar foundation on which to base their demands. I shall later discuss more fully the meaning of the professions for the democratic way of life.

Work is the omnipresent function of human life. Whatever quality of goodness in life we may particularly seek—whether liberty, equality, fraternity, or some more technical formulation—if the work at which man earns his living does not contain it, we need not expect its appearance in any leisure that comes when his work-day is done. What is thus an indispensable means must in ethics be regarded as part of the end itself. Disregarding for the moment all technical objections—that the concept of work is ill-defined, that it is factual rather than normative, that it is popular rather than scientific, that it is practical rather than theoretical—let me clarify and insist upon the main point: in this reluctant cosmos the fundamental activities that

are necessary for life are the natural materials, and with most men the only solid content, for the good life also. If ethical values are not in current work, they are for most men nowhere; and if they are nowhere, now is the time to begin to create them and make them available for workers in their work. The job of making and getting a living constitutes the nucleus, if not also the norm, of ethical virtues and moral codes. The day's work of common men and the distribution of its products furnish, therefore, the meeting place for economics, politics, and ethics. Ethics must either at the very beginning boldly and bravely claim the hand of work as its affinity or humbly accept her after her ruffian suitors have done to her as they would. What kind of bride ethics finds work to be when economics buys the trousseau and politics gives the bride away is, indeed, written in the "Romance of Man."

The wholehearted acceptance by ethical minds of the concept of work, however, would not only help to humanize the social sciences, but would at the same time furnish

a solvent supplement to other current ways of stating the goal of endeavor. The so-called hedonistic paradox—the more one seeks pleasure, the less pleasure he gets—carries a moral that far transcends a pleasure philosophy. The business of holding as the goal of life anything that cannot with impunity occupy the focus of attention strikes one as wasteful. To describe a good which it is right to get, but wrong to try consciously to get, is certainly to reflect either upon the good, or upon consciousness, or upon the world that so relates the two. Some for whom pleasure is too crass, declare that self-realization is the highest good. But to seek it is to lose one's soul. There is, indeed, as the late Woodrow Wilson once remarked, "no more priggish business in the world than the development of one's character." All those, indeed, who indicate some psychological quality as life's highest good must needs conclude with the warning that the best means to this good end is to keep the eye, not upon it, but upon something more objective.

Now work is the concept that best epitomizes this objective reference of ethical thought and turns it to democratic service. It is confessedly a broad term, as any term must be that claims to contain a large proportion of insight. But it has meaning, and meaning such as tends to unify all human striving around a moral purpose. Though the task is not here essayed, the concept is presumably capable of being rigorously defined by those who feel the need of dialectic rigor. But what is equally significant for democracy is the fact that this concept has a wholesome meaning for those not dialectically inclined. It reaches far enough to include all who earn their living or contribute productively to society, but not far enough to allay the growing uneasiness of, and the democratic suspicion toward, those who idle their time away in conspicuous leisure. And the very presence of such an honest-seeming word silently shames those who would preoccupy themselves with the comforts of the leisured few while the daily toil of the millions lies outside the realm of creative joy.

While the denotation of the term is thus generous enough for all needed purposes, its connotation is confessedly and admirably such as to keep on the stage those who heretofore have had to stand in the rear aisles if they were fortunate enough to get to the performance at all. Work suggests dirt and sweat and fatigue; but this is as it should be for humane theory in a world where the employment of the majority is, and perhaps must always be, manual.

## V

This insistence upon humanizing work means, of course, that I think my dependence to be not upon counsels of perfection, but upon preferences capable of realization. Since, however, legion is the name of those who believe that work of certain sorts, necessary now, necessary always, is of such a character as to dwarf those who must do it, it will not be amiss to indicate briefly the reason for the hope that is within me. A reasoned statement on this point might well constitute a *magnum opus* to which a

democrat could willingly dedicate a lifetime.

1. It is precarious to say precisely what kinds of work lack promise for individuality and happiness. No activity that is involved in any economically necessary work can with certainty be declared inexorably distasteful. And if this be granted, then the richness of adventitious factors—high pay, short hours, publicity, social recognition, sense of duty, skill, friendly rivalry, etc.—is such as to put on the defensive anyone who affirms that there is necessary work that nobody will ever do willingly and that some work must therefore inevitably degrade personality. In the absence of valid evidence to the contrary, there is reason not only for not despairing, but even for hoping that a creature who by nature loves activity and social recognition may be capable of greater accommodation within the limits of contentment than inconsiderate handling of him has ever yet discovered.

2. But even if one grant that some necessary work is now intrinsically defeative of

the good life, it does not absolutely follow that it is necessary for men to do that work. The more man uses his head, the more he has made the machine serve for his hands. No-one can say that the production of machines has reached, will ever reach, the saturation point, nor can anyone justly affirm as a general proposition that the law of diminishing returns applies here. The possibilities that lie in this suggestion cannot be fully glimpsed until society directs its inventive geniuses to the weak spots of our industrial order and rewards social engineers in proportion to the significance of their achievements. Already machines have lifted from the backs of men the staggering loads and eased their muscles of the tearing strains that earlier they shared with beasts of burden.

3. But it will be said at once, and not without justice, as we have already admitted, that machines have substituted for these burdens and strains a monotony that is also suicidal to the good life. While this claim has enough truth to indicate clearly the perplexing character of our problem, it must be

said that the extreme monotony is characteristic of only the weakest points of machine production. Millions of people in our civilization acquire from machines a sense of power and relief from drudgery. This is not to minimize the objection, but to put it in its proper perspective. I am unwilling, indeed, that it should be minimized, for it represents one aspect of the major problem of democracy. But I cannot think it without possibility of remedy. It is not time to despair until public opinion attacks monotony, and with it the whole moral cost of production, as it has already attacked the slowness of hand production and the brutal burdens borne by earlier generations. One manufacturing concern, as a small example of what I have in mind, recently found its labor turnover so heavy on a certain highly mechanized task that it was itself at last financially forced to do something about it. Its inventors were put to the task, and did not stop until they had produced a machine that did the job automatically. Let this prudent attitude be generalized, and mankind will have

begun a new industrial story—one in which psychology and social engineering may do for human contentment what they have been doing of late for human efficiency.

4. It will be seen, of course, that my optimism rests finally not on any concrete means here proposed for bettering the evils to which the pessimist points, but on a frank recognition of how little we have as yet tried to do. And at last the matter comes back to the point already emphasized. Not until we see that it is on the work of average men that the good life must be founded will we make the effort which alone can determine whether a thoroughgoing moral democracy is possible. There is no adequate ground for pessimism until we have done our best. There is, however, ground for hope, for without it we shall not make the effort.

We must, therefore, on the one hand explore the power of social stimulation for mechanical invention and of social prestige for investing otherwise unpleasant work with meaning, and on the other hand we must exploit to the full the potency of machines for

banishing both drudgery and monotony. If both these prove inadequate instruments for our hope, and we do not discover meanwhile other more promising procedures, then, but not until then, shall we frankly admit that the good life is not for all men. Having made the great renunciation upon such experimental evidence, perhaps the supermen of the future can then proceed to do grandly with a good conscience what the strong in our day have sometimes done with an equivocal conscience—enslave the ignorant and the poor and the unfortunate for the glory of the superior few.

But in the meantime we shall labor on in the hope

> That not one life shall be destroy'd
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,

when man has made the tale complete. For inspiration we shall turn to our Whitmans who in prophetic mind have heard "America singing" a thousand varied carols, each one commemorative of joy found in daily work. And for instruction we shall send our children to those rare souls who never cease to la-

bor in this hope. On the recent occasion of his ninetieth birthday President Eliot plumbed the depths of democratic potentiality when he cautioned Harvard students to ponder well while in college "in what work, in what profession, you can find joy in your work all your life. The chief satisfaction of my life," he added, "has come out of the joy in work." There is, indeed, no sounder or saner or profounder democratic challenge for us today than the imperative that every human being shall be at work in a job that makes at the same time a living and a life.

## VI

But it would not be fair to our case to leave this suggestion as to the humanizing of work wholly up in the air of speculation. There is substance as well as atmosphere to our hope; for indeed enough has been already accomplished to open our eyes wide to even greater possibilities. The general legislative achievements and organizational advances of labor have already been touched upon; but the profounder accomplishments lie perhaps

in spheres less vocal—in the fields of the fine arts and of the professions. So noble an object lesson do they together furnish that we shall be amply rewarded for discussing them at some length.

If one starts the discussion with the very basis of all our hope for the humanizing of work, he must begin with the activity of childhood. For the fact that children by preference are constantly active is the basis of belief in the ethical potentiality of work. To be sure, we call the activity of children play rather than work. There is, however, a common thread connecting them, and that a very substantial thread. They both involve the expenditure of energy to the point of fatigue. Children voluntarily exhaust themselves at play. We need not concern ourselves with the difference between work and play, because this very difference becomes a connecting link between them. Play stands at the top of the joyous activities. The next rung in the ladder leading down to drudgery is represented by the fine arts. They require a persistency of application that makes them

more inaccessible than play. But their techniques once mastered, their practice is much like play in the intrinsic meaning given. The creative joy is proportionately higher than that of play, because artistic devotion involves greater and more intimate tracts of man's higher nervous centers. Social approbation, removal from dirt and sweat, and relative absence of manual fatigue—these all have had their parts in the process that has saved the fine arts from the opprobrium of work. Next below them stand the learned professions; then come the more humanized types of business enterprise; later the skilled trades; and from these there gradually descend the kinds of work that are called drudgery. But the ladder is continuous: one can come down it, but does it not offer possibilities of ascent as well? These possibilities we shall explore and exploit in the following discussion of the professions.

## VII

The fine arts aside, it is, then, such typical professions as medicine, law, and teaching

that furnish us the best democratic norm this side of utopia. What distinguishes a professional man from those less fortunate in their work is the fact that the professional man has usually found work that he enjoys doing for its own sake. But there is promise for democracy in the fact that the enjoyment does not spring wholly from the extrinsic nature of his work. Something happens to his work by virtue of his doing it as a professional man. True, his work is not primarily manual, but it is certainly not entirely removed from muscular fatigue. Indeed, it differs from non-professional work far less in this regard than is commonly supposed. It differs far more in being shot through and through with insight. He has mixed with some muscular exertion a liberal measure of that magic tincture called knowledge. And thus the warp of knowing is interthreaded with the woof of doing, so that the professional man may be fully clothed for the good life. He works, moreover, under the light of distant stars, fulfilling past hopes and foreseeing future judg-

ment upon his workmanship. He thus sees life more steadily by seeing it more whole. And the primary secret of his great advantage centers in the liberalization and participation of mind. The details of this process whereby work otherwise neutral and even sometimes negative acquires intrinsic value and dignity are of the highest moment for the democratic way of life. With the eventual elucidation of this point constantly in mind, I shall now briefly characterize professional activity as realizing three closely connected values: (1) the socialization of experience, (2) the equalization of opportunity, and (3) the naturalization of ideals. These we shall regard as constituting democratic criteria different from but harmonious with the traditional ones discussed in earlier chapters.

1. *The professions socialize experience.*—The long years of common training for the professions cement men into a habitual unity that lies much deeper than words. And yet these hidden segments of common experience may be touched into full activity by a single technical word—a magic call to community

which, like the password of a secret order, enables "one brother to know another in the darkness as well as in the light." But for purposes of social unity a profession exploits not only habituation, but idealization as well. The human animal cannot well content himself with a habitual life. Habit gives stability, but ideas facilitate growth. Surging impulse meets obdurate muscle and glances off into fantasy. Ends arise that must be utilized in order that impulse may be tamed. When these ends are sharable, co-operation becomes possible; and when they are actually shared as programs of joint action, there are created in the secular field all the noblest values that religion once thought to monopolize. A noted medical practitioner recently remarked to me that the American Medical Association serves the modern doctor much as the medieval church served its members. Only in the professions and in the fine arts, but frequently in both of them, does one hear the remark that a man's work is his religion.

Religious associations that have special-

ized in brotherhood too easily grow static, but where the soil of fraternal living is rich enough to produce, and free enough to treasure, healthy hypotheses, there hope for change and adventure and growth survives. The physical frontier for the Daniel Boones of the race is gone, yet every man that puts his trust in ideas hears again and again the alluring voice that came to Kipling's explorer, "Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!" Now the professions utilize both the possibility and the actuality of new ideas to deepen socialization. For in them we have achieved an organization based on habit in a degree sufficient to assure continuity, but devoted to ideas adequately enough to set a premium upon discovery. As idea-breeding organizations, the professions manage, therefore, to socialize human nature teleologically as well as habitually, and thus succeed in building a brotherhood more upon the ideal of creation than upon that of possession, a fraternity with its face to the future rather than to the past. In this fruitful socialization of work

we have an ethical creation of the deepest importance for democracy.

2. *The professions have so socialized work as to enable all members to share its finest potentialities.*—The learned professions, to be sure, are not alone among modern institutions in having an ideational fringe. The family has never been without a mind; but children certainly have not been supposed, if indeed they are now, to participate creatively in the formation of family policies, and the wife traditionally in a degree only slightly above that of the children. Religion also has always had its rendezvous with the contingent, where uncertainty was real and doubt was vital, but this adventure has been for the few, not for the millions of its devotees. For the latter the life of unquestioning faith must suffice, dumb acceptance of what some prophet on the frontier of control fearfully or joyously wrought out while bursting storm clouds obscured Sinai's summit from the vulgar view. In government also there has been intellectual adventure, but only for the elect—or the elected. It has not been for

subjects to reason why; theirs it was to do, and all too often theirs it was to die. In modern industry the story remains almost the same. Policies are policies—for the few; work is work—for the many. And with each properly placed, business is business, as before. In all these forms of social organization, the story grows monotonous. Each has its growing tip—the point where mind must arise and venture the ideal in order to circumvent the actual. But this really human part of earthly activity has been reserved for a handful. The many have been progressively robbed of whatever rationality they might have had by being denied its systematic and responsible exercise.

But in the professions the story is significantly different. For the professions recognize for the first time in any large practical way that insight is fundamentally the product of a co-operative quest. And they have seen, too, that co-operation is defeated by outstanding social and economic inequalities. All too often the difficulty of achieving economic equality is made the excuse for ex-

cluding the poor from any participation in the life of mind. It is obvious, as we have already argued, that the two kinds of inequality are closely related; but still the really meaningful and exciting part of the whole game of living—the creative quest, the thrill of seeing new planets swing into ken, the making and breaking and transforming of hypotheses—all this is available in the professions. Here is a free field, with mutual favors everywhere. There is no room the humblest initiate may not enter, there is no road he may not tread, there is no idol he may not smash. And if professional men do not have all their dearest goods in common, as is meet with brothers, then it is not because they do not tax all their available vocabularies to make them so, as one may judge from the frequency of their association in local, state, national, and international gatherings, not to mention their ever enlarging number of bulletins and journals. It is true that this fine attainment of spiritual equality is a rainbow set off against a very dark social background of countlessly more numerous

men who toil at embittered tasks. But that is a tragic motif that must take its own place in the plot. Further discovery and control wait on deeper human co-operation; effective co-operation stays for operative equality. The professions afford the best available cornerstone for the good life.

*3. And, finally, the professions naturalize ideals in the process that produces them.*—The professions are further set apart as a democratic norm by the nature of the goal for which they work with such heartening equality between their members. Their objective is not fixed, nor is it idealized into non-human perfection. As over against industry, which seeks through work to achieve an end that is different from, and far better than, work, the professions emphasize the concept of function. And so they do not have to depend primarily upon extrinsic profit to make their activity worth while, nor yet upon happiness as something isolated in the process itself. Their goal in general is the continuous reconstruction of living in the light of constantly arising needs; but, more

specifically, they make the performance of daily duty its own reward—the prevention and healing of disease, the harmonizing through law of men's tangled economic and social interests, the facilitation of growth through the stimulation of instruction. The professions spread abroad the living though long slumbering truth that the purpose of human life, individually or corporately conceived, is the enrichment of human experience. Happily deprived, therefore, of the lulling compensation of a goal so ulterior as to be secure without his efforts, the professional man can turn with avidity to the domestication of the spiritual and to its exploitation in the realm of the natural. Ideals become to him but ideas, and ideas but seeds for enriched performance. Here is a type of activity which, like the fabled phoenix, finds perennial life in unceasing death. Through this naturalization of ideals, this institutionalization of change, the professional man achieves in practice that fine way of living that the philosopher long ago christened "the golden mean": as for money, he suffers

neither from too much nor from too little; as for security, he dare not grow complacent, but neither need he fear; and as for positive happiness—well, he has his work.

## VIII

Thus do the professions appear as harbingers of democracy. They have socialized great tracts of human work, have made the adventure of ideas available for all their members, and have fertilized the process of living by leavening it with the dynamics of thought. If I have painted the professions overbright—and I have—it is in the interest of developing their potentiality, a potentiality that can be used for judging them in turn. From visions of "what ought to be" we turn again to make over "what is." In improving the professions and making their potentiality available for all human enterprise, we have an ethical task for every temperament. For if the professions are half of what I have pictured them from within, they still stand forth when judged from without as favored aristocracies in a world of

want. Democratic aspiration cannot rest content merely with beautified oases.

The professions must be generalized. On what compulsion? First, upon that of sympathy. Good men cannot live well while their fellow-creatures cry through drudgery and monotony for selfhood. But, second, upon the compulsion of prudence. Professional men cannot live merely by taking in one another's laundry. The professions can save themselves in such a world as this only by giving up their pride. Their salt loses its savor in isolation; their leaven might be made to leaven the whole lump of life. Here, then, is a task for all men of broad sympathy. Finding the professions an isolated good, the democratically minded must seek to universalize their spirit, not only in logical exercises, but also in actual human community. Flirtations with piety will never achieve this type of universality. It cometh not sheerly with observation; it cannot be attained even by fasting and prayer. Aristocracies have always acted prudently in hypostatizing values, for that is the only possible way to

objectify class virtues. When the democrat declares that the obvious alternative to hypostatization is socialization, he outlines his own function in this outstanding task—the task of objectifying in the "great society" what is as yet subjective in professional microcosms.

## IX

The industrial relations studies now issuing from the Russell Sage Foundation can well illustrate two aspects of this problem of generalizing the professional spirit. In the first place, they indicate growth in the unpromising soil of present-day industry of the professional virtue of generously sharing intellectual prerogatives. These studies make it clear that access of workers to policies and management is surely on the way in certain basic industries. But, in the second place, they indicate how impossible it is deeply to humanize one segment of activity alone, how necessary it is to democratize value in order to save it. The Dutchess Bleachery cannot make its partnership plan more than a bright

flash in the feudalistic darkness of the textile industry as a whole. The Minnequa Steel Works of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company cannot make its Employees' Representation Plan more than a half generous gesture, because it must compete with the United States Steel Corporation which counsels only with stockholders and God. And so the story goes through the whole gamut. The success of every promising experiment in realizing the good in concrete living is conditioned by the universalization of the experiment.

But the promising fact remains that there are innumerable voices in industry inquiring what hour of the night. And other heralds of morning gently streak a hopeful sky. The family moves toward equality; the church gropes for mundane goals; and Leviathan himself can no longer disdainfully boast that all lesser associations are but "worms in his vast entrails." Not only have the pluralists disturbed him theoretically and the Guild Socialists alarmed him practically, but even F. H. Bradley, in a brilliant apology for the

state, betrays Leviathan's ethical remoteness in the past and at the same time suggests how in the future he may bring forth fruit meet for repentance, in the admission that the fundamental condition of moral development is that men should be "fully engaged in satisfactory work." Though aristocratic in lineage, and as yet all too largely so in their outward relations, the professions rest upon a different basis from disappearing aristocracies of the prestige type. They rest squarely upon the discharge of necessary social functions. This it is that gives promise of their eventual democratization and universalization.

Nothing, however, could be more salutary for professional men in a democratic age than to remember that many of the professions arose in aristocratic times and have in their traditions handed on ideals as regards treatment of those outside their groups that are quite at war with the more humane instincts so admirably at work within the various groups themselves. To strut down demo-

cratic lanes of hospital wards disporting the mannerism of a Hippocrates or before classes of eager students distributing the *ipse dixits* of a condescending Pythagoras can do nothing in the long run but belittle the professions that have made Pythagoras and Hippocrates famous. In other moods, indeed, must professional men impart the knowledge that has redeemed their work from drudgery. In the age of Hippocrates and Pythagoras knowledge was identified with virtue, and its possessors capitalized it for purposes of prestige. Later men declared that knowledge was freedom, and those who had it celebrated their freedom by enslaving others. Since Bacon's time we have called knowledge power, and many of its modern possessors have set themselves apart and have exploited the weak. Knowledge is indeed both virtue, and freedom, and power; but wisdom hallowed with justice consists in such generous sharing of knowledge as will render power and freedom and virtue common property and thus democratize the whole of life. This

goal marks both the inner meaning and the outer mission of the professions.

I have thus emphasized the principles of professional activity only because they seem to me the best available approach to the supreme moral task of the hour—the humanization of work. The professions are promising not merely because of what they are but also because of what they have overcome. Some of them have attained their majority only through the renovation of work originally the most unpleasant. Surgery and nursing, for instance, constitute a challenge to the creative spirit; yet in itself the native material for both professions is repellent—blood, vile odors, bad hours, and nervous strain. If such unpromising material can become dignified and creative, why not other kinds of labor as yet unclaimed for joy? Even if facts themselves are unpromising, aspiration must outrun them. To doubt that work can be humanized is cynicism; to despair of it, pessimism; to deny its worthwhileness, nihilism; and to refuse to try for its universal

achievement, cowardice. But to call names does not materially further the aspiration. There remains for a concluding chapter a discussion of the kind of leadership needed for democratic advance.

# DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

*Chapter VI*

# DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

THE spectacular universalization of the democratic form of government has not by any means, as we have seen, silenced criticism of the democratic way of life. The basis of criticism has shifted, however, as democracy has passed from victory to victory in its world-wide advance. Gone, for the most part, are those sturdy characters who once stood out openly against the popular tide. There is a frankness about Plato and his kind that one who lives amid the current strategy of indirection must admire. Plato charged outright that democracy was bad because in its madness it sought to equalize those whom nature had differentially endowed. He would have none of it, except under duress. Aristotle, though more tolerant, was still outspoken in his criticism. And on the very threshold of our own century Sir

James Stephen spoke as a fearless and free man in declaring that

> no room is left for any rational enthusiasm for the order of ideas hinted at by the phrase, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity"; for . . . . there are a vast number of matters in respect of which men ought not be free; they are fundamentally unequal, and they are not brothers at all, or only under qualifications which make the assertion of their fraternity unimportant.

Writing a dozen years later, Sir Henry Maine, whom the discerning student is likely to feel little more sympathetic than was Stephen, spoke much more softly regarding democracy. Its greatest merits, one gathers from him, are its internal inhibitions against its own success. Verily, the worldly prosperity of democracy has softened the tongues of critics, even though the hearts of many of them remain heavy and fearful.

Since Maine, it is only now then and that a lonely Faguet cries out in the wilderness his whole mind regarding the popular idol. Even the old and disillusioned have learned from the racy wisdom of the young that though you dislike the hand that feeds you,

it is better to manicure than to bite it. There is pathos in Lord Bryce's conscious effort "to repress the pessimism of experience," as well as a moral in the reason he assigns—"for," as he says, "it is not really helpful by way of warning to the younger generation, whatever relief its expression may give to the reminiscent mind." We have come upon days in which it seems that the dearest enemies of democracy have sublimated their fear of popular violence and their love of private property, and have articulated their sublimation as a deep solicitude for the health of democracy itself.

## I

The most common form this solicitude takes at present is a lament over the poverty of democratic leadership. Democracy, in the estimation of these all too eager doctors, finds itself, like so many delicate mothers, unable to nurture its own children. It must, therefore, in order to achieve its ends, call in the skilful help of those who, drawing their wisdom from an unrevealed source,

yearn to spend and be spent for the welfare of this deserving patient. Even Faguet reveals to those who pursue his heart beneath his bellicose title—*The Cult of Incompetence*—a deep longing to save democracy by furnishing it gratis an aristocratic leadership. President Nicholas Murray Butler many years ago offered to America the same friendly service as that of Faguet to France. Knowing that "liberty is far more precious than equality, and the two are mutually destructive," he counsels us to "put behind us the fundamental fallacy that equality is demanded by justice" and to see that "the United States is in sore need to-day of an aristocracy of intellect and service." But the highest achievement in the art of indirection must be credited to those who in a vein of unconscious irony call themselves humanists. With some qualifications, Irving Babbit may be taken to represent their attitude. Professing solicitude for democracy and setting out to cure its ills by providing a superior leadership, he praises democracy with faint damns until our whole social order

stands subservient to an aristocracy the real nature of which is disguised by its being called a class of "workers." But it turns out that instead of being either manual or scientific workers, they are "ethical" toilers, and the only work they do is to live upon the fat of the land and furnish society a noble example by merely being their illustrious idle selves. Manual toilers must humbly remember, however, that they also work who only stand and pose. This salvation of democracy through the proper leadership is what its author pleasantly calls substituting "the doctrine of the right man for the doctrine of the rights of man"! Verily such wily Antonies come to bury, not to praise, democracy. Were such men alone in questioning the power of democracy to create adequate leadership, we should know how to deal with them. We should regard them either as malevolent strategists or as naïve persons self-deceived into believing that the voice of their private interests is but the echo of humanity's need; and their plans, one and all, we should treat as destructive propaganda.

But the situation cannot be so summarily dealt with, because there are among those who bewail this democratic weakness men who are at heart friends of democracy and exemplifiers of the democratic way of life. So we are deterred from giving our enemies short shift by the surprising presence of our friends in their front line. When William James, who was a natural democrat, emphazises leadership as being the crucial test for democracy, we are deterred from dismissing it as a false issue. When Lord Bryce, who was intellecutally at least a friend of democracy, not only accepts leadership as being the democratic touchstone, but then concludes that democracy "has not enlisted in the service of the State a sufficient number of the most honest and capable citizens," we are given further pause. And when Professor William E. Dodd, who is both a natural and an intellectual democrat, bewails the quality of leadership in our democracy, we are forced to retreat from the fray and think the matter over.

II

The faith of at least one democrat is not shaken by taking this sober second thought. Faith that is not blind corrects itself and renews itself by viewing alternatives. Now, whatever may be the defects of democracy, the only possible alternative is of such a character as to renew faith in democracy, however poor it may be; for the contrast is at bottom between selecting one's own ends —rough hew them how one may—and lending oneself to further the ends of another. This is really no alternative, for individuality arises only with the assumption of the responsibility of directing one's own life. And what will a man give in exchange for his soul? But even the gloomiest pessimist does not put the alternative quite so sharply. It is not a question of leadership versus anarchy, but of better versus worse leadership. Yet it may be that those who cry up the need of leadership are demanding a type of leadership that democracy cannot produce and does not want. Meeting this difficulty, let us make a

distinction between traditional leadership and democratic leadership.

The contrast here intended is between the leadership of prestige based upon authority, and the leadership of knowledge based upon facts. The one is a matter of status and may even be hereditary, the other is a matter of insight and must be achieved anew by each individual. The former conception goes along with the notion of a journey aimed at a definite place, with a few who love the goal, know the way, and confess the duty of conducting the many willy-nilly to the glorious destination. The latter conception is that life is worth living in its own right. We are not on a journey; if we are, no one knows where we are going. We are living daily, and our chief need is for such a reformation of the content and conditions of our living as will enable us to appreciate it fully in the here and now. We need, therefore, leaders in the process rather than guides to a distant goal. The contrast may be better brought out by considering the two types

where they flower most luxuriantly—in absolute monarchy and in science.

## III

The absolute monarch was once upon a time a leader in every department of life: giver of laws, setter of manners, establisher of religion. As a trivial current example of what once prevailed on a grand scale, consider the influence of the Prince of Wales upon current masculine styles. Overnight whole lines of merchandise go upon the shelf out of deference to our royal visitor's caprice. Generalize this case from costume to custom and from morals to politics, and you get the ideal leader of tradition: the man whose every word, and deed, and whim set a precedent, because he was he. The potentates who rode at the head of every procession were indeed the grace and the flower of the old order! Often allying themselves with deity, they sometimes essayed in moments of supreme kingliness to order nature herself into subjection; and in the imagination of articulate admirers both the winds and the

seas obeyed them. This philosophy of authoritative leadership idealized the all-or-none principle: one, an all-leader; the rest of mankind, altogether followers.

I do not mean, of course, to imply that in actual fact leadership has ever for any length of time rested on sheer arbitrary authority: even absolutism bears within itself fated seeds of a more humane order. There is in man that perverse loyalty to ethical form that makes the sheerest tyrant uneasy unless his authority can be displayed as resting upon right rather than upon whim or force. Slavery in America, for example, was first recognized as an unnecessary evil blamable upon the mother-country and awaiting only an occasion to be remedied. But becoming economically profitable during the interim, it evolved into a necessary evil. Given time, any evil that is necessary ceases to appear evil at all. And so through the metamorphosis of a century slavery emerged in moral habiliments, christened by Calhoun as a "positive good" and justified not only by the common welfare but also, as Professor Bled-

soe argued, by the good of the slave himself. The *malum in se* of one century became the *bonum in se* of the next: the right by might became the right in reason.

Aristocratic leadership has never for long masqueraded as arbitrary. Indeed it has always been at pains to cloak caprice with majesty. One simple method has been to assume that most men do not know what is good for them. If religious sanctions can be so used as to content common men with the belief that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," the rest of the way is easy for aristocrats. One of Plato's subtlest devices for guaranteeing inequality was thus the founding of leadership upon insight so esoteric that only a very few could ever discover the common good. Plato's justification for his philosopher-kings is the common justification the world over for the leadership of authority: superior wisdom has been vouchsafed to the few. Follow them and be happy, desert them and be damned. The easy way with dissenters is to declare, with Jonathan Edwards, that discontent with the

established order is the surest mark of those foreordained to damnation. To declaim against social injustice is in some governmental democracies still a jailable offense.

In spite of all devices, men have, of course, always questioned the bases of such leadership, indirectly when it was not safe to do so directly. When Socrates was told by the young Euthyphro that the reigning gods constituted the celestial supreme court for all questions of morals, he queried searchingly as to whether an action is holy because pleasing to the gods or pleasing to the gods because holy. Christian theologians also were later to raise the question as to whether divine leadership is of the prestige or of the knowledge type; for did not the quarrel between the Franciscans and the Dominicans as to the primacy of intellect or of will have this import? Given a geographical habitation and an earthly name, the controversy certainly involved the relative merits of absolutism and democracy. Thus vaguely but surely did coming events cast their shadows before.

## IV

The arrival of political democracy, accompanied and reinforced by science, ought to have changed the conception of leadership for it is perfectly obvious that leadership in science is of a different mold. That the old notion of leadership has disappeared so slowly is, however, not strange. One ceases indeed to wonder at its persistence when one considers on what absolutistic foundations modern democracy was built. Be it remembered that both in America and in France we built upon natural rights and self-evident truths—that is, upon a foundation that could not be questioned without branding the questioner either a fool or a dishonest thinker. Such a procedure may have been necessary as an immediate protection against enemies who had made the prevailing logic, but it left no way for friendly engineers to safeguard the foundation against the inevitable wear of the inexorable years. Foundations laid outside the domain of reason are not subject to repair and reconstruction by reason. This is why human institutions built

upon some eternal rock of ages are later found to rest upon shifting sand. It is significant that the two modern countries that built in dead earnest upon natural rights initiated democracy only through revolution. Utilitarian England was able to come to the same result by discussion rather than by bloodshed. Fighting is indeed the only way to end an argument of which the major premise is that your opponent is a fool. Renouncing the efficacy of human compromise for the certainty of natural rights and winning our initial success by the ordeal of battle, we have continued the precedent by believing in a "manifest destiny" apart from the guaranties of human intelligence. Building beyond our resources, we have relied on occult and transcendental agencies to see our project through. Our susceptibility to, and even partiality for, a leadership that rests upon prestige drawn from esoteric sources has thus been of a piece with the other dependence we have placed on vague authoritarianism.

The foregoing philosophic reason for the longevity of an outgrown conception of lead-

ership is reinforced by a common-sense reason based upon the persistence of a deep illusion of childhood. Adults mediate the physical environment to childhood, and impress the child, his confidence once gained, as being far wiser than they are. This dependence upon the funded wisdom of another in moments of personal trouble is so easy a way of life that in most of us it long outlives childhood. One does not have to be a Freudian to understand how the child pursues this eidolon from parent to teacher, from teacher to hero, from hero to heaven. Our emotional nature hankers after the departing dream of omniscience long after our intellectual nature is content to give it up as another dear but dead illusion. So long as men cultivating this illusion demand as compensation for human loneliness and helplessness a "friend behind phenomena" and as compensation for personal fallibility an omnipotent, omniscient leader—so long they are not prepared wholeheartedly to accept such sheer experimentalism as democracy must take as its valid foundation. The acceptance of the demo-

cratic hazard is hindered also by that human inertia which makes it comfortable for one to lie back on his oars in the belief that another wiser than he is guiding the craft aright. When such comforting phantoms are slain in one form, they return in another guise—like the hero of a once popular ballad who, when his legs were shot away, fought still upon the stumps. Eternal vigilance against these spurious hopes is the price democracy must ever pay for its liberty; but such vigilance taxes human nature to the very limit of its spiritual endurance.

## V

It is, I think, the persistence of this outworn conception of leadership that accounts in the main for our disconcerting discovery of some of our democratic friends in the front line of the advancing enemy. Both Lord Bryce and Professor Dodd, for example, show contamination with this older ideal by their emphasis upon political leadership as being the type by which democracy is to be judged. Lord Bryce, as indicated in an earlier

chapter, goes so far as to say that democracy denotes no more than a form of government. Professor Dodd, though clearly having a feeling for the contrast between democracy as a form of government and the democratic way of life, nevertheless turns all too easily to judge democracy by the kind of political leaders it has produced. Taking such men as Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson as the flowers of our democracy, he grieves that "only once in half a century or so does there appear a master leader."

This common predilection of men like Bryce and Dodd for regarding political leadership as of typical, if not of superior, importance in a democracy suggests strongly the presence in their minds of a lingering loyalty to the notion of leadership once universal but now—thanks to science—no longer in unquestioned repute outside of politics. The politician's infamy, to adapt Pope's famous couplet, does not grow out of the fact "that he was the first by whom the plan was tried, but that he is the last to lay prestige aside." Religious leaders whom one

could have longest forgiven allegiance to the old—so indigenous is the idea of authority to their profession—are going before the politicians into the kingdom of democracy, for speaking no longer as persons having authority, they are more and more content to join the scribes and sociologists in humbly following the trail of the facts. It is only the political leaders who still on principle point to themselves rather than to the facts, who depend upon mystic phrases uttered in pious tones, for attracting and retaining followers. Here and there, indeed, may be found a Borah who suspects that knowledge is not wholly alien to the political enterprise. Dr. Harold F. Gosnell, through his recent analysis of the leadership of Boss Platt, has shown us, however, how deep-seated and persistent is the old type of leadership in current political life. Prestige is indispensable to its success, and the knowledge upon which it relies is more likely to be of men and of strategy than of ethics and economics. In the words of William Bennett Munro, it is "personality" that counts in politics.

VI

Science has discredited this type of leadership by the simple process of revealing that nature is too tough to be subdued by phraseology and of showing that it is impossible for any one man to know as much about the natural conditions of human welfare as these spectacular leaders of the past ought to have known in order to fulfil their promise. This science has done by throwing light upon both the nature and the goal of knowledge. To Plato the technique of knowing was nonsensuous if not indeed semi-mystic, the process led outside daily life into an unchanging world of pure forms, and the objects of knowledge, once knowledge reached its goal, were primarily for contemplation rather than for use. Science, however, has shown us that knowledge is not something got at by incantation, nor revealed the better to prestige and pomp. It has indeed abolished the royal path to wisdom through the back gate of the mystic mind and has insisted that we seek knowledge by detailed observation through the front gate of our human senses. Along

with this changed nature, science has given to knowledge a new goal.

Passing from the Socratic conception that knowledge is virtue and coming to the Baconian view that knowledge is power, man-come-of-age knows that it is not to palaver but to insight that we must look for control of the factors that condition our human living. So long as men had neither knowledge of nature nor the technique whereby to acquire it, so long had they to be guided, if at all, by fabulous reports of esoteric leaders who claimed, if not to have seen deity face to face, then at least to have looked in on his "hinderparts." Such a vision has constituted more than one Moses an authoritative leader for life. If one wishes to see how antiquated such a philosophy of leadership really is, let him but inquire what it is that constitutes Michelson a leader today in physics or Burbank a popular leader in horticulture. The older leader was strong in proportion to the ignorance of his followers; scientific leadership is strong in proportion to the intelligence of the followers. The

tendency for all of us to think in terms of the former type of leadership rather than of the latter is explained by historic reasons; but is it justified by a comparison of the benefits mankind reaps from the two types?

Faguet has happily conceived the transition from the old to the new type—a change which he laments—as being the process of relegating old men to the shelf. He says,

> An interesting treatise might be written on the rise and fall of old men. Civilization has not been kind to them. In primitive times, as among savage races to-day, old men were kings. . . . . All this, however, is very ancient history. That which undermined the authority of old men was the book. Books contain all science, equity, jurisprudence and history better, it must be confessed, than the memories of old men. One fine day the young men said: "The old men were our books; now that we have books we have no further need for old men."

As a matter of fact, the relegation has gone farther still. The books that supplanted the old men have been in turn supplanted by the laboratory; and the old men who refuse to abdicate in its favor have been reduced from respected to unrespected im-

potence. Hear Galileo's letter to Kepler, written while this crucial process was being initiated for modern times, regarding professorial devotees of authority, who in his day stood out against the new idea of leadership:

> Oh, my dear Kepler, how I wish that we could have one hearty laugh together! Here at Padua is the principal professor of philosophy, whom I have repeatedly and urgently requested to look at the moon and planets through my glass, which he pertinaciously refused to do. Why are you not here? What shouts of laughter we should have at this glorious folly! And to hear the professor of philosophy at Pisa labouring before the Grand Duke with logical arguments, as if with magical incantations, to charm the new planets out of the sky!

The gist of this modern attitude may be put in a few words: There is no rightful authority save the demands of life upon itself. The wise man alone can be our leader, and the wise man is he who can best size up the situation, can best get at and interpret all the facts. But even he must not interpose himself between us and raw experience. His function is to point, not to order. We follow him

only as he follows the facts. We follow him not because we attribute to him occult insight, but because in the distribution of labor it saves our time for our own preferred tracts of experience if we take his word for the more recondite facts in his own field.

Science, like industrialism, rests squarely upon the principle of the distribution of labor. The moment any man speaks in his own person rather than in the name of the facts by which men must live, that moment he slips back to an ancient order and so far forth undermines the integrity of science. The necessity for leadership in our modern life grows out of the impossibility of any man's being omniscient. But the same lack that necessitates leadership prescribes the kind of leadership needed. It is of the specialistic piecemeal type. In order to know enough to lead *here*, I must choose to be relatively ignorant *there*. That means that the choice that makes me a leader *here* requires me to be a follower *there*. But I must demand of him whom I follow, even as he demands of me, that he shall not put either his prestige or

his interests between me and the facts. This clearly means that in a civilized society, every man must be a follower in many fields. The only alternative to being a follower in many fields is being a follower in all fields. For he who today thinks to speak with authority upon things in general remains a fool at home.

But the peculiar virtue of a democratic society is that, recognizing that every man must be a follower in most fields, it gives each man an opportunity to be a leader somewhere. It does this by emphasizing liberty, out of which alone can grow the responsibility which creates the right type of leadership. It does it by emphasizing equality, which, among other things, means the right of even the humblest to live by the facts rather than by the pretensions of the proud. It does it by emphasizing fraternity, which makes leadership worthy of attainment. It does it by emphasizing such education as will fit every man to get at the facts that lure him most and will qualify him to follow intelligently in fields not his own. And knowing

that no man will live happily without moral ideals, it conceives truth and justice as mundane values of the common man rather than as transcendental absolutes accessible only to an intellectual or moral aristocracy.

Since democracy as a way of life does, and as a form of government ought to, aim at the greatest common good through the development of each individual to his highest, it must be judged not by its ability to produce a few "master-leaders," in deference to whom human nature abdicates its highest prerogatives, but by its ability to make every citizen a creative leader in some enterprise, however small, and at the same time a contented but critical follower of superior insight in other fields, however extended. This means, of course, that the crucial test of democracy is the health of science under its patronage; for if leadership grows out of a knowledge of the facts rather than out of egoistic pretensions, then it is to the laboratories and the libraries and the studios—in short to the experiment stations in a thousand fields—that we must look to find those who are actually man-

kind's most indispensable leaders. Friends of democracy will judge France by its ability to produce, not Poincaré, but Pasteur; America by its ability to produce, not Washington, but Franklin. This means in the large that democracy succeeds in proportion as it discovers a form of education calculated to get at the bases of physical and social living and then makes this education accessible to all its citizens. So judged, democracy makes, heaven knows, a poor enough showing, but at the same time a showing not to be ashamed of. So conceived, it constitutes a way of life yet to be adequately tried but one that faith must uphold with the desperation born of knowing that there is no humane alternative. So long, certainly, as democracy is judged by its ability to produce the kind of leadership that would subvert it, we are in a poor way to make our criticism of democracy constructive.

## VII

It may be objected that, in thus putting a supreme emphasis upon knowledge as the basis for democratic leadership, we are over-

looking an indispensable characteristic of leadership—impartiality. This is an objection that will bear inspection, for certainly impartiality has been the golden virtue claimed by the older philosophy of leadership. Why it has been so emphasized is easy to see. An all-powerful leader who is biased for some and against others would in the long run prove insufferable. How insufferable indeed such leadership has proved may be read in the unending tale of political revolutions and social rebellions that make up so much of human history. Given a ruler with irresponsible power, clearly impartiality in its use would constitute a subject's best protection. It is the mildest ethical demand that could be made of a ruler, and at the same time a logical expectation of one whose claim to lead completely outruns his knowledge.

Professor Krabbe has indicated in a recent book—*The Modern Idea of the State*—the various expedients that aristocratic times proposed for the attainment of this supreme desideratum—a leader without personal interests. Plato sought to guarantee impartial-

ity in his state leaders by making their life communistic. Advancing the same arguments as are used to justify celibacy in the Catholic communion, Plato denied to his guardians wives of their own, children of their own, property of their own. To deal justly, to rule wisely, they needed only such detachment as would render them impartial. Over against Plato's method of destroying interests, historical absolutism has sought impartiality by elevating the leader above society, endowing him with property, honor, leisure, prestige so superior to that of his subjects as would remove any temptation to take sides or serve selfish ends. Monarchy has thus been made to occupy "a supersocial position which enables it to intervene in the conflict of social interests with the greatest possible impartiality." Dante's formulation of this procedure and his defense of the ideal involved are classic in the history of political theory.

The first comment to be made upon these historic means to impartiality is that they are never effective. Even modern monarchs,

as Bryce puts it, "in general have chiefly relied on and favored the aristocracy who formed their Courts, and have allowed the nobles to deal hardly with the humbler classes." But even if impartiality could be attained by either route, there is no reason to think that justice could be attained merely by such a negative virtue. For impartiality to be effective, it would have to rest upon adequate knowledge of the interests involved.

This leads to a word regarding the third expedient noted by Krabbe—a supreme emphasis upon education of the intellect. If men can be given sufficient intellectual power—so the theory runs—they can be lifted above the solicitations of passion, property, and even of persons, and can, therefore, lead wisely because impartially. A logic-machine as leader would not—it is presumed—feel the call to take sides, and democracy in its emphasis upon education has perhaps been in part vaguely moved by this hope.

It is, however, fairly clear that significant impartiality cannot be attained even through this avenue. If intellect can be so divorced

from interests as to be utterly neutral, it will not feel the worth of interests sufficiently to do them justice when they conflict. Such complete aloofness would certainly seek the monastery rather than the presidency.

To make a long story short, we know well enough that genuine impartiality is not attainable; we suspect that were it attainable, it would not be desirable. Certainly the weakness of the intellectual approach to it is indicated by Plato's admission that knowledge of the abstract ideas could not guide one home through the dark. Most assuredly in this complex age we no longer solicit, or accept, guidance from men who are, to use the felicitous phrase of John Stuart Mill, "unprejudiced by any knowledge of the facts." Without concrete knowledge, impartiality is worthless for purposes of leadership; and with knowledge significant impartiality is impossible. It may well be that working compromises by leaders who know and who serve to the top of their bent the interests they represent is the nearest approach to this ancient virtue that we can now

expect in political life. It may well be that democratic leadership so far as it manifests itself in legislation, for example, must in the future be not leadership, but leaderships; blocs are already here even in America, and it is practically certain, in spite of recent deprecation from high official circles, that they are here to stay; for they mean the presence in congress of men who really know the interests they serve and who serve them openly. And those of us who see what interests have actually been served by those who professed impartiality, are likely to prefer unreserved frankness to underhand betrayal.

This political tendency to confess the interests to which one dedicates his intelligence is but a reflection of a new groundswell in education toward a recognition of the emotional foundation of human life. The older philosophy of education, corrupted at heart by religious fables, asked men in the name of intellect to renounce the emotional demands of the present for the sake of some future goal; but since in the nature of time the future never could become the present,

men were educated to postpone their dearest interests to a hypothetical eternity. I speak not of what they did, but of what men were supposed to do. What they actually did, being human, was to indulge all at once, upon occasions when the emotional pressure became too great, demands which if properly distributed could have enriched the whole of life—and then in sackcloth to repent of being human. The man who slaves at an unwelcome job only to spend the blessed wage at the end of the week in getting gloriously drunk displays, through the disguise of caricature, the outcome of traditional repression and of the puritan idea of education perpetrated under its influence.

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk
of the beginning and the end,
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now,
And will never be any more perfection than there is
now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

The complete antithesis of this educational philosophy and civilized practice would be to regard, as in the foregoing lines from Whitman, every stage of life as autonomous and as too meaningful to be subordinated to any future stage. This redemption of the present from some phantom future has been John Dewey's greatest contribution to American thought. Ordered by this transforming insight, education becomes not preparation for life but apprenticeship in the process of living. Assuming the continuity of all values, such a philosophy of education teaches that the best way to prepare for any future stage is to live richly and sanely any present stage. The rich emotions, like the humble poor, are always with us. Puritanism starved them (in theory) for expression in a grand eternal release. Indeed our emotional nature conditions intelligence by furnishing it ends and energy without which it would atrophy. Intelligence honors itself most when it frankly devotes itself to the cultivation of the soil out of which it grows. The new education

more or less frankly recognizes this, and so seeks no other end that that of better, fuller living, and promotes no other discipline than the training of both youth and age, not for life, but in living. This revolution, when completed, will be the greatest educational transformation that mankind has seen. Such educational practice for youth, and more and more for adults also, does but furnish the proper orientation for the pluralistic conception of leadership which I have indicated as the great outstanding democratic need.

I do not seek, however, to conceal the serious nature of the change involved in the rejection of the grand conception of leadership inherited from monarchies and its replacement by the new conception of leadership suggested by science and now being inculcated through education. If we are all to become specialized workers, who will make us whole again? That is a real question, and a perturbing one for all who see how specialization tends to undermine the goal of social unity on which prophets and poets alike have agreed to found democracy. We can cer-

tainly no longer fall back with Adam Smith on the naïve trust that "an invisible hand" will tie together what we have dissevered. Herbert Croly did us a real national service in pointing out years ago that the surest way to ruin all promise of American life is to believe in such a specious promise. Nothing seems more certain now than that the God of our fathers is impotent before that task, a task we should gladly share with any competent deity. God has too consistently stood with the aristocrats; for his leadership, like theirs, rested upon prestige and authority. Democracy can expect no help from the celestial court as traditionally constituted. If democracy is not to go starkly atheistic, as many of its deepest prophets have foretold, it must discover or invent a new God who will be sympathetic with its aims. A democratic God might prove to be the noblest work of man. But in the meantime we must apparently take ourselves for better or for worse.

The whole conception of a common goal for mankind is tied up with a metaphysics

that practically necessitates the conception of leadership that I have been calling undemocratic. The medieval life illustrates this very aptly. The goal was transcendental, and thus out of reach of natural men. It needed for leaders men who had knowledge, yes, but knowledge of the goal itself. This meant an esoteric knowledge that not all men could attain. Those who could attain it would by right become leaders and overseers of all the rest. Knowledge of the goal was compatible with the grossest evils, slavery for instance. Such an arrangement gave clearly enough a unity, but a unity of subordination. And on this basis people who as they stood were not worth saving were saved to a salvation that as it stood was not worth having. The state absolutists from Rousseau down have substituted for this frankly transcendental goal a relatively mundane ideal, the "real will." But this new scheme for unification proves no more satisfactory, for the "real will," being different from both the wish of the majority and even the desire of all, is so inaccessible that most men do not have it and

have no way of obtaining it. They must be told of it by leaders who gather such dignity and power from their special knowledge of it that they are then justified in forcing men to be free, as Rousseau put it, or, in the phrase of Bosanquet, to serve their own best interests, which they do not recognize as their own.

Social unity that has to be achieved so heroically is not worth the price. The only fraternity that democrats can countenance, as I have already argued, is that which is compatible with fundamental liberty and with a real measure of material equality. And this means almost certainly that whatever unity is achieved by mankind cannot be achieved by emphasizing a common goal. We may as well face sooner or later the personal revelation that the right answer to the question, "what is the chief end of man," is that there is none. Human life does not have any one goal; indeed it may often have none at all. Life has only such ends as we set up for it ourselves; and we have never been able to set up one that any great majority of

people would recognize as theirs. The only way to get unity through a common goal is to coerce men into our way of thinking, and then camouflage our immorality by declaring that we punish them for their own good.

That way toward brotherhood must be given up. It is a blind alley over which should be posted the Dantesque warning: "All hope abandon ye who enter here." But what cannot be achieved by emphasizing a common goal seems to me to be in process of realization through the adoption of a common method of discovering and achieving our own separate goals. By substituting for specious mystic insight the common human power of observation and by then refining raw observation into scientific accuracy through laboratory experimentation in natural science, through statistical methods in social science, through criticism in the humanities, and through reflective procedures at law, the modern age approaches a more meaningful unity than has been known among men before, whatever the reputation of the Middle Ages in this regard. The only

hope for a common goal that does not involve coercion is to make the going itself the goal and to cultivate a taste for variety in travel. Democracy must be democratically arrived at. Whether such a policy will lead us to the sociologists' heaven remains an open question. But let us join the troop that takes the venture, knowing that every other road proposed has led men to the theologians' hell. This discussion but emphasizes our earlier conclusion that the brotherhood which is basic to democracy must through wise nurture breed not only tolerance, but also deep appreciation, of variety throughout the whole of life and thought.

In the evolution of life, progress has been achieved only through mutations conserved by the environment. In the evolution of good living this lesson learned from nature must be applied with studied art. The hope of democracy lies in an attitude that will not merely prize variation but will also promote it for the enhancement of experience. We do not, then, so much need as an educational goal and as a political means impartiality as

we need an intelligent partiality—a partiality rendered generous through fraternity, rich through liberty, and universal through equality.

Leadership based upon prestige and flowering toward impartiality is the aristocratic ideal. Leadership based upon special knowledge and flowering toward control of facts for human ends is the democratic ideal. The latter means practice in living rather than preparation for life. It is an ethical and educational ideal that breaks the age-old monopoly of leadership and by so doing distributes far and wide the seeds of individuality. A social order in which every man lives richly his own life, leads his fellows where his knowledge justifies, and follows them where his ignorance compels—that is the way of life which shineth more and more unto a democratic day.

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